In Old Salem

BY

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FOREWORD

I have sought in these stories to collect local tradition, and connect it with information gathered in the Gazetteer.

While the ordinary reader will concern himself with the stories, the student of Research and the next Editor of the Gazetteer will find in the following pages much food for thought.

DEDICATED

To

W. ERLAM SMITH Esq.

Director of Public Instruction

In Commemoration of

HIS OPENING

THE EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITION

SALEM

15th November 1933

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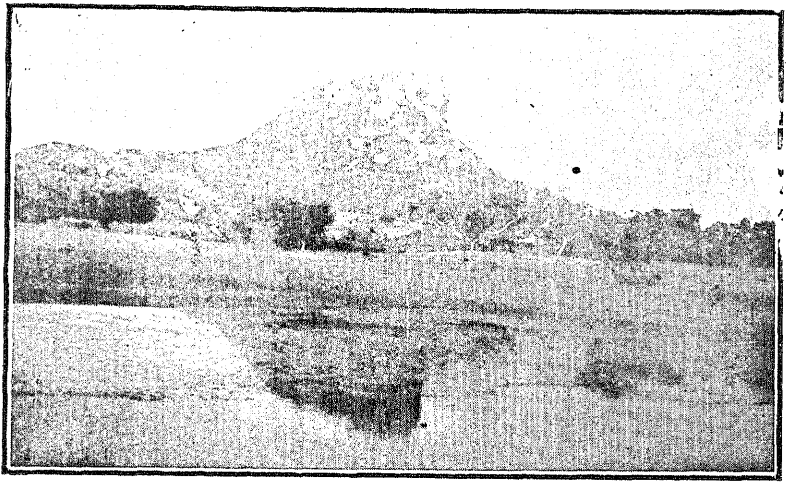
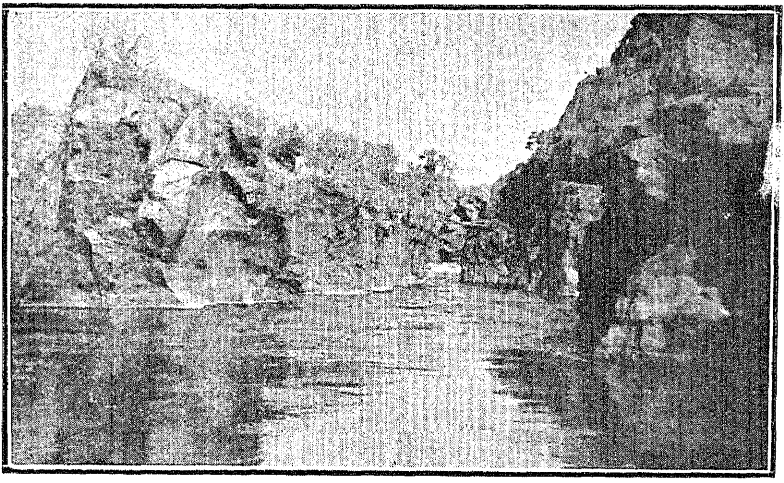


Anchettidrug (First Page)



Meka-Dhat (Page 5)

IN OLD SALEM

PREFACE

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF PICTURESQUE SALEM

A bird flying over Salem district or a man in an aeroplane will see a mass of hillocks dotting the whole area and the majestic Cauveri skirting it on two sides. Unlike the landscape in other countries, with heights growing gradually from the soil, the hillocks appear abruptly from level ground and at another end disappear as abruptly. The longer ranges are the Shervaroys, the Kollis, the Kalrayans, the Bodha Hills and the Kanjamalai Ranges. But the scattered hillocks are as stars in the firmament, countless and innumerable. The more considerable and the larger among these, bear hill-temples and forts, like those at Namakal, Tiruchengode, Sankari, Krishnagiri, Anchettidrug, Shulagiri, Hosur and Jagadevi.

The river Cauveri, 'deep and wide' washes the district 'on its southern side'; also on the western. Along the Cauveri, we have

the Hogenakkal falls, the Mettur Dam and the picturesque bathing ghats of Komarapalayam, Mohanur and Velur.

Coming closer to the earth we have the Siddhar Hills in the Alvoi Range near Rasipur, where a slender stream keeps perpetually falling. The tall peak of Nainamalai and the blue range of the Bodha Hills to the north and south of the Travellers' Bungalow, Rasipur, hold a temple at the top and at the foot respectively.

At Namakal, sixteen miles south, we have the rock with the fort walls in a state of excellent preservation; the Hanuman forty feet high; Sri Ranganatha's temple accessible by a flight of steps; and Namagiri Amman temple at ground level. The carved figure of Narasimha and the bas-reliefs on the walls to either side are admirable works of art.

At Mohanur and at Velur, the river bank has an ancient temple and the purification of the body by a bath is followed up by the purification of the spirit by worship. Coracles ply across the river and carry passengers and loads of vegetables to the neighbouring districts of Trichinopoly and Coimbatore.

The Hill temple of Tiruchengode arrests our course as we fly past. The Vinayaka temple is

perched on the head of a walrus-like mass of rock and the two temples of Subramanya and Ardhanari lie lower down. They have been resorted to by pilgrims for ages. The walrus aspect has been hit off cleverly by an eighteenth century artist, Thomas Daniell, R. A. The masonry-work Gopuram is a marvel of the builders' craft. A five-hooded serpent fifty feet long carved on the side of the mountain is a noteworthy feature and the hill from this spot winds off into a tail, giving the whole rock the aspect of a snake. At a distance and from the Attayampatti road, the peak has the aspect of a rhinoceros horn.

Sankari has a hill fort with nearly twelve rows of fortifications. The shrine and the spring at the top attract pilgrims and the curious may see the heap of paddy-husk accumulated through long years evidencing effective occupation in times of continued warfare. *Kalmatham* or the fat of the Rocks, is extracted here and the shrine of Shaha Mardan Ghazi is well worth a visit.

Omalur Fort is in ruins but not the temples including the one, Sergeant Hoare is said to have put up unto Mariamman.

At Mettur, a mile of masonry dam 225 feet high holds back the waters of the Cauveri. The fertilising stream is made to flow evenly through

the year according to agricultural needs. The generation of electricity and the preparation of ice and liquid Oxygen are the most interesting features here. Mettur is also a model town laid out by Town-Planning experts. The regularity of its roads strikes an observer from above even more than from level ground.

At Dharmapuri the most noteworthy feature to an aerial traveller is the belfry of the old Taluk Office. It recalls the old world splendours of the spacious times of Tahsil Thimmapier. Horns were blown when he started in a palanquin at 4 P. M. for his office. Horns were blown again when he actually began work, which ended when day ended at 12 midnight. The Munro Pillar commemorates a popular and beneficial administration.

The forests of Pennagaram are noted for their peacocks and the Hogenakkal falls are justly famous. After descending in many forks, the stately Cauveri flows in a deep gorge betwixt lofty rocks of a lustrous dark colour. They seem to be all of magnetic iron. There is no cleft or crevice where plants may strike root or birds build nests. A few huge caves are worn into the face of the rocks, weird meeting-halls of the mysterious powers of nature. Only in such absolute solitudes is the still small cosmic voice

heard and nature's secret stands revealed. The water in the fullness of its strength moves silently on, *aequora tuta silent*, with the stillness of shelted water and the rocks in their stability and stateliness look on in silent majesty, while the petty creatures of a day, fish and fish-catching man, occasionally splutter and splash, jump out of the water or into it and quickly cease to be. Silence surges softly back and the whole scene is re-absorbed in its stone-eternal dream, in *Samadhi*, in that state of rest and peace where, one with the Universe around him, man loses his identity caught into the contemplative rhythm and music of the spheres! Behold it in the picture of the "Meka-Dhat," or Goat's jump!

At Royakottah we fly over the hill where Durvasa had his ashram, and over the *Idgah* and tomb General John Glover built in honour of his Mohametan wife.

The fortress of Krishnagiri on a rock shaped like a sugar-loaf next attracts attention. There are tombs of Mohametan saints and halls of assembly of Hindu Kings at the top and the graves of European soldiers at the foot. The place is rich in reminiscences and is connected by a strange chain of circumstances with the ill-fated Queen of France, Marie Antoinette. A local Mohametan gentleman who went on an

embassy to France was given the medal with the head of the Queen impressed on one side and that of the King on the other! The eagle rock near Wahab's vineyard is a monster of the species in the days of the giants, petrified to last through all time.

Shulagiri with its triple peak looking like Neptune's trident has a rock fort and was once known as Sholagere. The young Zemindar has a radio set and intends providing the place with an excellent protected water-supply.

Mathagiri once a Remount Depot, is now a Cattle Farm with one vast grass-land of extensive acreage. See the herds of cattle pass. There is no danger at this height, of their getting excited and charging you.

Hosur has its Chudanath temple on the hill, Mr. Sitaramiah's Basthi a mile away, and that romantic Kenilworth Castle known once as Brett's folly, but constituting his real claim to ever-lasting remembrance.

We fly over Jagadevi, Hanumatirtham, Tirthamalai, over Dundhubi rock on the banks of the Vasishtanadhi with its Yagasala; hover over Arapaleeswaran temple and its solitary cocoanut tree on the Kollis; past rivers and valleys fringed with jack trees and orangeries and fly back to the aerodrome on the top of the Shervaroys. The temple, the cave and the

spring, the Bear's cave at the foot, Duff Hill at a distance, the lake, the loop road, and Montfort School are visible and visible too from Lady's Seat, the Namam on Namamalai and the clock-tower of the College at Salem.

If you will know the people and their life, turn to the following stories which may tell you somewhat of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago."

THE BURIED TREASURE AT BELUR

All Salem is sacred, sanctified country. Association with Epic stories apart, Salem has its claim to be regarded as a holy spot, by reason of the many Rishis who have performed penances here. Bodha Rishi, Gautama, Kapila, Markandeya, Sarabhanga, Sanat Kumara, Brigu and Vasishta are only a few among many who have so sought Salem District for their *Ashrams* and so rendered it holy.

Belur, four miles north of Vazaipadi, is associated with Vasishta. Here, on the banks of the river called after him, sage Vasishta performed a *yaga*, the remains of which, in the shape of a white deposit, are still worn as sacred ashes by devotees at the local Siva temple.

The *Yagasala* is an elevated spot, a high table-land about fifty yards north of the village and about the same distance from the Dundhubi Rock where a *namam* blazoned on it, is the Temple's title deed to the Rock. The field is now sown with cholam and not very different from other fields, but in a corner is a cleft and in it a rusty chain ending in a big flat iron door said to enclose much treasure.

Sometime back a man entered into an elaborate contract, prospecting for buried

treasure about the region of Sind. Human nature being much the same everywhere and gold being a great necessity of comfortable existence, a retired chemist, one of Vasishta's *gotra*, settled down here and practised alchemy. He claimed supernatural powers and said he could turn any base metal into gold, by heating it white-hot and sprinkling it with the sacred ashes from the *yagasala* and the sacred water from the Vasishtanadhi. He also chanted some *mantram* and then there was the gold sparkling, glittering gold!

Pious brahmins, hard put to find a marriage portion for their daughters, called on the chemist and took away as much gold as they could carry. There was no ceremony, thread investiture, ear-boring, educating ceremony, but the chemist was applied to and he ungrudgingly gave away. Such a man was too good to live long.

One day there was a phenomenal cyclone such as has caused such extensive damage in Malabar this year (1932). Trees fell down and traces of path-ways were lost. Caves were filled in and confusion of boundaries followed. The yogi chemist, supposed to perform penance or practise alchemy in the cave, was nowhere to be found. The trees that covered the mouth of the cave were removed, but big black beetles

made further progress impossible and an iron door shut fast, which all the village could not manage to open, for the chain snapped or some blood-vessel burst. There was a sudden clap of thunder and the people desisted from further exploration, being content to sacrifice a goat at the spot, to appease the offended spirit of the place. The blood-stain lay long on the rusting iron to testify to the fear and piety of the people of Belur. That was all they could do to propitiate the Ghost of him who was locked up and lost in his own treasure-house very much like Ginevra, in that

> Chest that came from Venice and had held
> The ducal robes of some old ancestor.

Years passed by, before another adventurer, also of the *gotra* of Vasishta, settled down, trying to prospect, not for hidden treasure, but for magnesite, believing the rock-formation at Belur to be akin to that at Chalk-hills, Salem. When he saw the chain and the trap-door curiosity overpowered him, and he set up a crane and attempted to pull the door open. The ground beneath the crane softened and the crane descended deeper and deeper into the soil with every effort to raise the iron-door. It was like pulling up a man from mud and mire. One man scarcely comes up a little, before the other goes down deeper and deeper. Every

action having its reaction, the crane-top stood after a time level with the door. Galileo wanting to move the earth with a lever, not only desired to have space outside it, but also one solid enough to bear his lever and rigid enough to afford some resistance. Here it was all loose mud and quagmire.

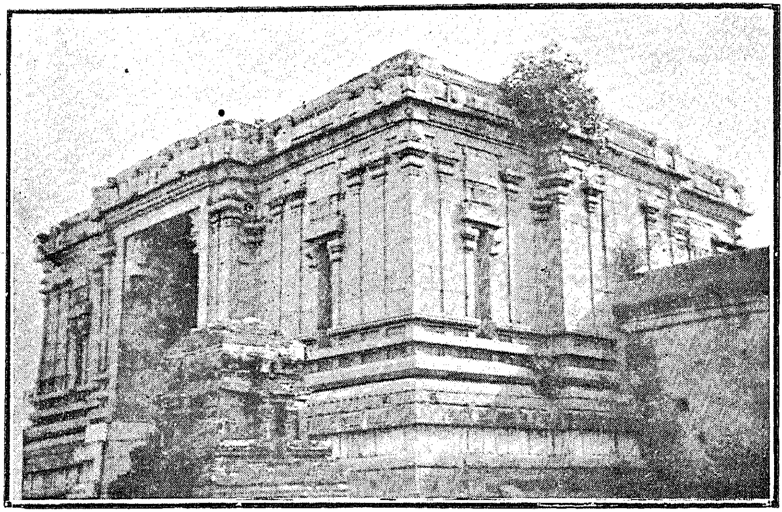
The engineer was disappointed, but sought to divert his thoughts by a change of venue. It appeared to him that after all the treasure might be buried under the temple tower and that the cave was only a passage leading to it. He experimentally washed his feet at the front tower of the local Siva temple. The water disappeared very quickly. The engineer began digging. The temple authorities objected. The engineer, a very knowing man, quickly silenced most of the objectors, acting on the well-known maxim of Walpole, that each man had his price. But he was unable to silence a venerable old man, who was a credit to his profession and refused to be bribed. He said such a digging spelt ruin and calamity and that the Rakshasa devotee, Dundhubi, had warned him in a dream.

The engineer went on with his work and discovered one beautiful image. The popular frenzy became uncontrollable. Every one began digging on his own account. About twelve images in all were unearthed, but the treasure was

nowhere to be found. The discovery silenced all opposition, though the toothless old mastiff, still faithful to the gods, kept barking ineffectually against the sacrilege of digging in sanctified ground. Then at last, with extensive digging, in all directions and by all and sundry, much of the lateral support to the tower was removed. The tower leaned forward; its masonry portion fell, burying under its load the impious and sacriligeous scoundrels who kept burrowing like bandicoots.

"I warned you," croaked the old bird of ill-omen, and forthwith the infuriated mob fell on him and tore him to pieces, adding murder and manslaughter to sacrilege. The old priest, like other priests, died a martyr as much to piety as to his own folly. With his dying breath he cursed the men that they should never find any treasure anywhere. With that, treasure-hunting at the tower ceased.

It ceased, only to begin with renewed vigour at the old spot. The exploring instinct in Belur was up, and the engineer, anxious to harness so much energy, set the men with crow-bars to lift up the iron-gate. The lid was lifted half-way, when a soughing wind sucked in the engineer and the nearest workman. The lid fell back with a heavy thud, the ghosts of three men gripping it fast.



Residual Portion of Belur Temple Tower

Bear's Cave at Yercaud (Page 21)

> We do the spirit wrong, being so majestical,
> To offer it the show of violence

said Ramaswami Aiyar, quoting Shakespeare's Hamlet on a question of spirit-lore. He would coax the spirit, talk to it kindly, beg of it, propitiating it with *mantrams*. He went in search of and brought with him soon an ash-and bead-covered sanyasi from Mannarghat and set him to work at the iron-door that had defied and finally enclosed the chemist and the engineer.

The magician was a fraud, as all magicians are, but he managed to hoodwink Ramaswami Aiyar and all the village. Under his directions people took the sacred ashes mixed with water or with milk as a specific for enlarged liver and enlarged spleen. The local headmaster testified to the efficacy of the medicine. A paralytic boy was so cured as to be able to ride up and down on a bicycle even to the extent of performing tricks thereon—driving without holding the handle-bar, driving on one wheel, picking up a watch when riding at full speed, in short, anything less than the devil-ride of looping the loop. This was ocular demonstration and advertisement of an unassailable character, and the magician accumulated a little fortune even with the sale of the sugar-candy and the scented wafers his devotees brought to him.

But at far-off Tirur—famous for pine-apples, wooden clogs, and ash-trays of the sacred variety—investigation was being carried on as to the whereabouts of I. Chandi *alias* Idichandi, a vendor of pounded tobacco *(Idichcha Pogailei)*, made out of the refuse stuff voided or vomitted by tobacco-chewers. The purchasers were mostly old men and old women who found the saliva-saturated stuff easy to manage with their weak old gums, but many died of the poisoning, and the man was apprehended. He escaped from police custody, assumed the garb of a sanyasi and had the good luck to be carried off by Ramaswami Aiyar to Belur to play the role of magician and medicine-man there.

While yet the blaze of glory was undimmed, he was suddenly seized hold of by a C. I. D. man, much to the fear and disgust of all Belur. Mahazars and petitions were sent in vain. Equally vain were applications for bail and subscriptions for defence. What the police took, they retained, and thus were the men of Belur disappointed a second time in their attempt to get at buried treasure.

One of the latest adventurers was a Mohametan Fakir. He intended to offer human sacrifice and to that end kept enticing small boys between twelve and fifteen with

sweets, inviting them to be with him, and finally made his choice of a cowherd boy Gollu by name. He put up a shed a little below old Vasishta's *yagasala.*

Oft and oft would he begin chanting: occasionally he would get a response, anklet-bells ringing in rhythmic order, a lion's growl, or noise of an army marching with drum and trumpet. On such occasions the offering would suddenly disappear, the dates, the cooked dishes, the fruits! It was clear contact had been established with the spirit-world, but as yet access to it was only partial, into the mere fringe thereof, or in theosophical parlance into the outer court merely.

The appointed day came. A goat was sacrificed. The Fakir drank its hot blood and began to prophesy. He revealed with remarkable accuracy the events of the two earlier attempts to open up the cave. He said a mist blurred the rest of the wonderful sight and fell faint. At midnight he rose up and chanted again. Buffalo-hoofs were heard to clatter on cobbled stones and *Mahizhasura mardhani*, the Kali, whose temple is on the banks of the Vasishtanadhi near the *Moksha-madu* or spot of salvation, appeared before the chanting dervish and demanded human sacrifice. Gollu who had all along been kept in readiness for the

sacrifice, suddenly disappeared in a fright, and the Fakir was left alone. It is said that in such contingencies, sorcerers offer their thumb and save themselves. The Fakir, frightened and dazed, hesitated and was forthwith ripped open by the Kali who, wearing his entrails as her garland, danced on the *Yagasala* and then disappeared.

All the old men of Belur aver they saw the dance. The Fakir's body lay for sometime unburied, all people being afraid to approach it. But it is reported the whole time the iron lid lay open.

Young Aladdins of the locality—Aladdin by name, Aladdin by the profession of tailoring, and Aladdin by circumstance, helpless orphans in the charge of widowed mothers—availed themselves of the opportunity to enter the cave with the hope of bringing back vast treasure. Most of them could not muster courage to descend even a few steps. Only one, an Aladdin by triple right of name, profession and circumstance, went in a certain way, but the bleaching bones and foul stench drove him back, and he remembered he had no ring on any of his fingers. Before attempting a second entry into the cave, he sought a goldsmith and begged him to lend him a ring. The cautious goldsmith would not. Aladdin persisted; the goldsmith continued to resist his importunity; and when

at last the goldsmith consented, the last morsel of flesh on the Fakir's body had been picked off by "dogs and all the birds of prey," and the cave closed automatically never to re-open again.

Facts are facts. A Muslim still holds the site of the Fakir's shed. The iron door and chain are still to be found at the corner of the *Yagasala*. The blazoned *namam* on Dundubhi Rock, as high vertically as the treasure is to the right of the observer, still blazes on the height. The Kali is still propitiated at the *Mokshamadu* on the banks of the Vasishtanadhi. Some images unearthed then and later grace the Madras Museum. The unageing stars look on. Headmasters come and go. The treasure lies hid for ever.

JAMBAVAN IN YERCAUD

I

All Salem is epic country. The Swetanadi is reminiscent of the *Mahabharata* and is reputed to owe its origin to the Archer-hero, Arjun, who with his bow-end scratched it into existence, when he wanted to pour water in libation to the Gods while performing some ceremony. He being *Sweta-Vahana* the river is called Sweta-nadi.

Ayodhyapatanam and Hanumatirtham are tell-tale and bear blazoned broad upon their forefront their title to epic fame! Hanumatirtham is believed to bubble over from a pot of Ganges-water flung after quenching his thirst by Hanuman, the monkey-general, into the bed of that dry river Pennar. Much nearer Salem, on the Salem-Namakal road near about the spot where another road branches off to Panamarathupatti, is the cleft of the Golden Deer with the optical illusion by which Sita was deceived and Rama and Laxman were drawn off from protecting her. At Panamarathupatti itself, the epic is said to have repeated itself in the *Lankhadahanam* of a hut where the local Ravana was sought to be burnt up. The bleaching bones of Jatayu are said to form the Chalk Hills of Salem. At Maharajagadai and at Sankari, are

rock-cut bas-relief figures of Hanuman with a story more or less legendary connecting the spot with Hanuman. Jambavan, the bear-ally of Sri Rama, is reputed to have found a home in Yercaud, in Salem District, in the Bear's Cave at the foot of the Shervaroyan hill.

II

Yercaud is now one vast coffee Estate. From the days of Cockburn and Fischer, the mountain slopes have borne their load of coffee, and silver-oaks to give shade to the coffee. Jack-trees abound near human habitations, which are further recognised by the abundance of plantains in many cases and of well cultivated gardens and orangeries in others.

Shervaraya Perumal being Vishnu and having taken up his abode, He alone knows how long ago Jambavan, took up his at the foot with a cool spring of clear and pellucid water in close proximity and a number of jack trees to provide him with his favourite fruit. A Champak tree with whose flowers he offered worship is still said to survive, and perhaps is the one, one sees close to old Mr. Norton's Bungalow, now Mr. M. D. Subbaraya Iyer's. Jambavan is one of the *Chiranjivis*, one of the Immortals, but the statement is not to be accepted as so much physical truth as poetic truth, the Immortality

being of the kind with which Keats' Nightingale was endowed, 'the bird that was not born for Death!'

Hindus rarely kill a bear, for fear the old original bear of epic fame should die at their hands and they incur thereby the sin of sacrilege. There is the story of the Brahmin clerk, Estate clerk or Tahsildar's, it is not clear, who rushed one night quite unwittingly into the arms of a bear and realising his awkward and unhappy situation, shouted out the *Gayatri* and *Apatham apahartharam* alternately and with frantic, violent and desperate emphasis on *Sri Ramam* to remind the bear, of its old time and honourable association with that epic hero, but to no purpose, for the bear opened his skull with its powerful claws and sucked off his brain like a tender-cocoanut. But it was believed, he was a hard and cruel man and deserved his fate. Stories of bear-hunt have been written from man's point of view, but at the Bear Cave, even he who runs may read something of man-hunt from the Bear's point of view. When bear or tiger intrudes on inhabited villages or among human dwellings, he who shoots down the wild animal is a hero, or a benefactor. He skins the brute, mounts its head on a shield and puts up the trophy for his fellows to admire. In Coorg, when a man shoots a tiger he is wedded to the

carcass and is ever after entitled to wear his moustaches with side-locks—*Gala-mishi*—with the grimness of a bear and the general expression of the face of a Jaguar. But when man seeks the bear out in its lair and the bear safeguarding his own, mauls or mutilates the intruding man, there is no admiration for the bear. The Bear's Cave at Yercaud had its floor covered with human skins, a white skin for a variety, like the occasional human display of a Polar bear's skin, and human skulls were rolled about by the little bears and some were piled into a cairn and others made into a garland, such as Siva or Kali is represented as wearing.

When young bears grew of age, they were trained in man-hunting and there was one bear not less valorous than St. Julian d'hospitalier who caused no small amount of devastation, sacking whole villages and putting whole families to death, even as he did whole herds of deer. Packs of wild dogs were kept by the bear as tamed and trained dogs were kept by St. Julian. Remorse overtook him, as it did the Saint, and he went up the hill and took his abode inside the Shervarayan cave and died a pious death, borne as it is believed to the bosom of the Almighty Bear, that presides over the fate and destiny of bears.

III

Years after, a bandit chieftain, taking advantage of the evil reputation of the cave, occupied it and carried on his depredations in the plains, running off with the loot to the cave, and to keep up appearances used to cover himself up in a bear's skin both for warmth and for frightening others off. As long as he was single he maintained the secrecy of the abode, but when he took his bride to the cave and later still, begot a daughter, the mystery could not be kept up.

"We cannot follow you into this jungle. Here take up your guns and your money. We are quits."

"Don't be fools! Keep the guns with you for protection. I cannot throw away my life, nor shall I imperil yours unnecessarily. We owe a duty to the *sirkar* and must hound out this dacoit."

"He is not here. Even if he is, he has knowledge of potent herbs and by rubbing the juice on his body will become invisible. We cannot fight such a foe."

"Nonsense: there is no such thing: you talk like simple folk."

"We are simple folk, but we know what is what; with one plant-juice head-ache is cured: with another wounds are healed: a third serves

as a purgative: a fourth stops purgation. We talk nonsense! Wise man, go your way and let us alone!"

"No: I shall not, Plants, herbs as medicine we know of, but making a man invisible is all bosh! Come, take up your weapons and let us go forth."

"No, no, we shan't."

"I shall double your pay and get you a nice reward."

The Police Officer thought he struck a weak chord in the heart of the mountaineers whom he had pressed into police service, to get at the dacoit Kandan. The response was feeble; one or two fellows looked hopeful, but the general out-look was gloomy.

"We must go back now," they cried, particularly as the rain was coming down in torrents.

"We shall take shelter awhile against the rain," replied Mullings, the mule of a Police Officer, who was obstinate and would not hear of a cowardly retreat. "If I don't have my way, I shall shoot down you beggars," he said using threat, but fearing he might ruin his cause by so doing, relented and agreed to get back that day.

IV

The Malayalis left quickly, before Mullings could change his mind. Mullings himself

lingered on; said he would smoke and then follow.

Thulukka Kandan was the dacoit's name. There are many of the name to-day who follow peaceful occupations. Kandan was so called as he came of a Hindu mother and a Mohametan father. But he himself took a Mohametan wife and called his daughter by a Hindu name, Malachi as being born on the Hills. Now Malachi, not suspecting any detectives in the vicinity, wandered very near Mulling's camp.

"Who are you? Have you lost your way?" inquired Mullings. "Who are you? Have *you* lost *your* way?" asked Malachi in return, which made Mullings pause and think.

They gazed at each other for some time, Mullings quite shame-faced and blushing and she aplomb and with absolute self-possession. "You look like a King," she remarked, "which is the *nadu* you rule over?" Mullings had a notion of his own personal charms and dignity, and just kept up the fancy. He would play the King for a while. "Yes, I am from Gundur-*nadu*," he ventured at a hazard, that being the only *nadu* he knew of and one which had been brought under British control. The Collector of Salem had issued notices as to why the land should not be taken away from the *Pattaikarans*; they would not appear before the Collector

at Salem for fear they should be taken prisoners. Their property was forfeit by default by the civilised process of acquisition. Gundur had so passed out of Malayali hands and so Mullings mentioned it as his *nadu*.

After a while, taking courage he asked: "Would you like to go there with me?"

"Yes, if you will marry me according to Malayali rites, after taking the consent of father. As for my mother she is dead."

"Who is your father, pray?"

"Why, the King of this *nadu*! Don't you know him? How you talk! As if any body could come here without the permission of my father!"

"I am sorry. Is your father Tulukka Kandan?"

"Yes: he is sure to welcome you. Will you marry me?" All his past life flashed in a panoramic view; the home of his childhood; the intense love but intense poverty of his parents: his early struggle to earn a day's meal; his emigration to India; his enlistment as European Head Constable, and lastly his hope of promotion in the service, if he could capture the dacoit alive. On the other side was the realisation of his infant dream to be a King somewhere, give the law to a savage tribe and be

wafted to death in the smell and savour and sanctity of Royalty!

He agreed to go with her, resolved to have her, but not determined about anything else.

He saw before him a stately and majestic figure, one of nature's noblemen, in all the pathetic dignity of a dispossessed monarch, with the aspect of a caged lion chafing against the bars. Tulukka Kandan was about to shoot down Mullings, but seeing his daughter with him and seeing also the awe and regard that Mullings had for him, spared him, winking only to his body-guard to be alert so that no mischief might come from the white man.

Was this the dacoit he had come to hound out of existence, a man who bore on his face and features the *imprimatur* of a line of succession longer than that of the Popes? No, he would save him, marry his daughter and keep him in comfort, out of reach of the *sirkar*, and out of mischief as well. His Irish sympathy for fallen chiefs of his own land obsessed his mind.

V

The sequel is well-known.

Mullings married the girl and built for her a house on the site of the present Bear's Cave Bungalow: the "old dacoit" became a sanyasi and retired to the mountain-top: the heroic raids,

which his enemies called Dacoity, stopped and there was peace. Mullings retired and amassed a large fortune, called his estate Mullington as Mr. Campbell has called his estate Campbellton, and when his Malayali wife died, died of a broken heart, leaving behind him his daughter, familiarly known as Gundur Vellai or the white woman of Gundur Nadu. So quickly the estate fell into ruin, so quickly Lantana bushes blocked up the path, that people "opening up" an estate there, thought they were the first that ever burst upon that wild and unknown land. They forgot that old Mullings, shaggy like a bear, the *doyen* of the hills, the Jambavan of Yercaud, had opened up that estate long ago, built a house for Malachi, where had lived and flourished or rather lingered and perished, Gundur Vellai, the white lady, Miss Mullings.

FOUNTAIN OF BANDUSIA

This is the hour when the Goddess should present herself and confer on me whatever boon I ask for, or I should dash my head against these rocks and perish, bearing with my life, with my death, the testimony to the futility of *Tapas*, discipline or *Yoga*; I shall keep chanting *Soundarya Lahari!*" So spoke the yogi, who through many long years of penance had sought the favour of Goddess Durga, at the Panchavati or Garden of five trees—Asoka, Amalaka, Aswatha, Bilva and Vata—near the Gollapalli cave, in the valley of the Heaped-up-Boulders, a couple of miles east of Krishnagiri Rock.

Years ago the spot was a Mohametan cemetry, and its convex surface attracted a yogi who, after the manner of the great Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, planted the trees and performed penance under their shade. On one side of the grove, mounting on an escarpment, much hidden in the soil and moving as on an elephant's back, we reach a cleft in the rocks through which a cool breeze blows and fans the face. Crawling through the narrow passage we come upon a cave or recess with the canopy of a single rock held up by huge boulders all around. Through the crevices the sunlight comes peeping

in, in flecks and broken bars, and a lambent and mellow light, such as the Lotus-Eaters love shimmers all over.

All yogis have an open space and an enclosed one for the performance of penances: such an enclosed space may be seen at Kandal, Ootacamund, at the *Ashram* of the Onkaraswamigal. Performing penance in the open space, one diffuses his energies and mixes with the immensity all around; but in the enclosed one, one draws within oneself, like the tortoise within its shell, all one's energies, winding oneself up like the mainspring of a watch to gather the power, the force that one has to transmit to the world. Such a power-house was the cave, known as Gollapalli cave, forming part of the Panchavati, where our yogi was performing his austerities and propounding his ultimatum in the manner set forth. Tigers had sought a lair in the cave, but they could not stand the steady gaze of the sanyasi's eyes and fled, leaving him the sole occupant thereof. Shepherd boys occasionally strayed in, to seek shelter against sun and rain, but kept themselves at a respectable distance and in reverential silence, gazing on the man who stood on one leg or sat stiff like a corpse, gazing not on the tip of the nose but at a point between the brows that seemed to blaze with a lurid radiance. Others had come here

and performed penances or pretended to, but most of them failed as the shepherdesses grazing cattle in the vicinity came peeping in like *Menakas* to spoil the tapas of the young *Visvamitras*. Some of them entered domestic life; others were eaten up by tigers for their wickedness; only this man survived, and he was in the last stage of desperation.

Will the Durga appear, or was the man to perish? We do not know and cannot be certain. A bright-eyed shepherdess appeared at the time when the sanyasi was about to immolate himself and said: "Do not look for any miracles in these degenerate days of decaying faith, and do not throw uselessly away God's gift of life. What boons can any Goddess give you higher and nobler than a wife? Why do you with this asceticism insult your mother and all womanhood? Why don't you marry and shoulder the difficulties of domestic life and in it realise God? The family is the perfect temple. In it one realises God as father, mother, husband, wife and child. Lose yourself in the love of another and you realise God. What higher boon do you seek than God-realisation?"

"Avaunt, thou temptress! Seek not to ruin me with your blandishments. I have turned my back on worldly pleasures."

"You have turned your back on God also. Perish unpitied." She spoke.

He closed his eyes in horror, stunned by her speech, and when he opened them, she was gone. Was he to pursue her for further illumination, or was he to pursue his own course of conduct, steadily and strenuously adhered to through so many years?

He seemed to see a vision, and in the ecstasy thereof, with arms outstretched towards another shore, moved forward regardless of the obstructing rock and fell dead. Was his life a success or a failure? Did he reach the goal of his ambition or die in sight of it merely?

Blood gushed out in a stream, or was it cool clear water *splendidor vitro*, clearer than glass? The joy on his face showed his life had not been wholly a failure. He had not solved the problem of asceticism, but he gave up his life with such a joy that he must have seen God face to face. Out of his strength came sweetness, even as honey from the lion's jaw. So is it always; the strength of the mighty turns into sweetness that refreshes the world.

Does buried Cæsar bleeding make the rose more red? Does Mumtaz Mahal dying, re-issue from the enclosing earth in the spotless purity of radiant white marble, in that blown bubble that hovers between the sky's blue and the

river's? Why are tombs held sacred and even iconoclastic Mohametans offer worship at the spot where their saints—the *Paigambaron*—lie? Is it that power cannot pass away into airy unsubstantial nothing? Does beauty beget beauty and goodness goodness? What is this new transubstantiation, the blood of a saint turning into a perennial spring of cool refreshing water, like the sustaining bread and wine in regard to which churches have differed and martyrs burned at the stake?

The sanyasi died with the ecstasy of the vision radiant on his face, and a cool fountain that was never there before has sprung up, at which man and beast refresh themselves and bless the memory of Him who so gave Himself away for the benefit of his fellow-beings. So that it comes to pass that whoever visits his cave to-day finds in the centre, issuing from under a big boulder a spring of cool, delicious water such as is rarely met with in the vicinity. Either because you have exerted yourself to reach the cave and find water refreshing, or because on the way obeying a natural impulse you have picked up and munched a goose-berry from the *Phyllanthus Emblicus* or *Nelli* tree and, therefore, find the water very sweet, as you will in such circumstances find any water sweet, or simply and plainly because the water is by

nature so, the fact remains that the water is very sweet, as even those aver whose tongues have been thickened with betel-chewing and whose taste has been vitiated by the use of tobacco. Like the fountain of Bandusia, the water is more transparent than glass: the fierce hour of the burning dog-star cannot touch it: it affords a refreshing coolness to the oxen wearied with the plough and to the grazing cattle.

> O fons Bandusiae, splendidor vitro
> Te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculae
> Nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile
> Fessis vomere tauris
> Praebes et pecori vago.

THE EAGLE ROCK OF KRISHNAGIRI

"Familiar scenes recall old memories. I am sure I am quite familiar with this spot. Was it not somewhere near thirty years ago, say roughly about 1791 that under Col. Maxwell we unsuccessfully stormed this Krishnagiri Fort? I wonder what happened to the muslim woman, a sort of Lady Macbeth and classical Niobe in one, who suddenly rushed into my tent and sought my help? Is she alive? Is she dead? What might not have happened in thirty long years? If she be alive now, can I recognise her, get at her? Vain would be all my endeavour; let me turn down this page of my memory and be done with it.

Some fellows say they would like to live their whole life over again and have nothing to regret. I can't: I see in the retrospect one long string of folly, foolish things said and done, which I should ever so much regret and do other things instead; but this one thing of slaying my fellow soldiers to redress a woman's wrongs I never regret. It seems the one good thing I have done and am quite proud of. So here goes the spade, until all this soil is turned and is fit for planting vines in."

So spoke half-pay Colonel O'Flanagan, as he returned to his work in the garden at

Krishnagiri close to the Eagle Rock, after pausing awhile amid his toil in that wistful and melancholy way in which we all recall the past.

His was a careless life, full of all the so-called good things of life—cigarettes, wine and women. But far back in the recesses of his mind was a sense of duty, a sense of justice, a love of work and love of beauty.

He served the King and the Company honestly and having acquired a modest fortune retired on half-pay and settled down to cultivate a garden.

Krishnagiri is a place of rocks; wherever you turn you are confronted with masses of them flung pell-mell as if in a war of the Titans and the Gods. Some have a history; some a tradition; most, nothing at all to tell. They hoard and hold the secret of ages; of the earth-agony and the eruption of the volcano; of the emergence of the mass of gneiss and the petty passage of man in the vicinity; of generations that came into being and passed away, rose and fell like a tide. Only the rocks endured. Most prominent and best known is doubtless, the sugar-loaf rock which bears on its summit two tombs of soldiers of the Faith who in a desperate attack on the Fort gripped fast their Koran and marched at the head of the invading muslim force. Though they fell fighting foremost, their

headless trunks carried forward by devoted followers proved a rallying point in the fight and led on to victory. The tombs at the top are the reward of piety.

At the foot is an English cemetry where Captain Harry Smith and his small contingent perished at one moment by the explosion of a powder magazine and if local tradition is to be believed they died as a punishment for the impiety of eating pork in the sacred precincts of the tombs of Sayyed Patcha and Sayyid Akbar.

Not very far off is the Gollapalli cave where a Sanyasi immolated himself to be of service to mankind and the cool fountain of sweet water is said to issue like honey out of the lion's jaw, out of the bones of the severe and austere ascetic!

But there is one other rock more wonderful in shape, more admirable in its associations with the tragedy of life and death that tourists pass carelessly by, but which harbours within its silent recesses, grief, "too deep for tears." This is the Eagle Rock near what is known as Mr. Kutbudin's Garden.

When in 1791, Col. Maxwell led his troops against Krishnagiri, after a foiled attempt at taking the fort, "the English set fire to the town and withdrew before daylight." It was during

one of the unholy acts of incendiarism incidental to warfare that Fateh Khan was stabbed to the heart and his household attempted to be violated. Then in the fury of her indignant and injured state, Bi Fatima, widow of Fateh Khan issued forth and fearlessly sought redress at the hands of one of the captains, O'Flanagan. A beautiful woman in distress is a majestic and awe-inspiring sight and whatever the brutality of the British or Irish soldier, chivalry is never long absent from his heart. O'Flanagan sallied forth and slew some of his own men and so saved Bi Fatima and her children.

Years passed by. "Colts grew horses, beards turned grey"; when who should come to the Eagle Rock but Col. O'Flanagan on whom the fascination of the country grew and retiring on a decent pension settled down at Krishnagiri like General John Glover at Royacottah!

The spot was a delightful one not far from the river and in the close vicinity of a mighty rock said to be the original vulture of the Ramayana petrified. We know from the Ramayana that Jatayu was slain and cremated also, but so far as the Ramayana is concerned it is strange how much the story is in conflict with local tradition! However it be, the rock looks a good deal like a huge vulture of the giant days of old, contemporaneous with the

mammoth and the mastodon! Eagles build their eyrie on this majestic height and the Eagle aspect further confirms the name of Eagle Rock. So to the Eagle Rock came Col. Flanagan and feeling as the French say the need to cultivate one's own garden—il faut necessaire pour cultiver notre jardin—cultivated the garden as much to mind his own business as to find the needed exercise and yet more needed profit from gardening.

Some days after this reverie, the old Colonel took a walk into Daulatabad and unknown to him was seen and admired by a grateful soul; but in himself knew nothing and went back from the sea of faces he had seen, as little cognisant of any possessing an attraction for him as ever.

No man can help waking up in the morning, only some men wake up and find themselves famous; others infamous; and most people have nothing extra-ordinary. But Col. Flanagan woke up one morning to find himself afflicted with that dire disease of Palestine the cleansing of which took up so much time and effort of Lord Jesus. Was it Karma, was it all the evil of his past life bursting out in those foul eruptions?

Whatever it be O'Flanagan would confine himself to his garden and not show himself

before people. He hollowed a cave inside the Eagle Rock and lived in the obscurity which pleased him so much, but resembled so perilously the dungeons into which were cast the mother and sister of Ben Hur.

But the darkest moment is the moment of the highest hope; who should walk in one day or night, but the Lady Macbeth-Niobe-Cleopatra type of beauty in the person of the mature and full-grown Bi Fatima!

O'Flanagan could hardly believe his eyes. "Is this a vision or a waking dream?" he burst out. "No, Bi Fatima, in flesh and blood come to see you out of gratitude for your kind service of long ago," spoke she.

"Is it possible and do you really recognise me? after such a long lapse of time with so many changes in the days betwixt and between! and with this disfiguration which makes me loathed in my own eyes and which must be hideous in yours?"

"I recognise you and did so the very day you walked into Daulatabad. I was only awaiting a convenient opportunity to call on you. As for this disease, is there not balm in Gilead? If Christ Jesus be not on earth to say '*Thelo Katharistheti*' *I will*; *be thou clean*! have you not a woman's ardent love, and heart-felt gratitude to wash with her hot warm tears

all these sores into cleanliness and perfect health?"

"O Jewel of a Woman, how dare I ask you to share an obscure and despised life with me? You ought to sit on a throne and with one glance of your eyes speed forward or throw back the clock of civilisation."

"My husband died thirty years ago as you know full well. Alas! my children whom you saved did not survive much longer. Were I a Christian I should have become a nun, but I have vowed and dedicated my life to public good, to nursing the sick and helping the poor. Let me be your nurse and nurse you into health and happiness."

"Be it so. The Gods are kind. When they afflict a man with the greatest misery, they give him the greatest joy. Oh, that I had married you when I rose in the army to the highest rank and given you all the joy and comfort of existence; led you proudly about, showed you sights to see, fruits and viands to eat and life to live as in old Bagdad in the days of Haroun Al Rashid! Why does God, who made you so exquisitely unspeakably beautiful, make you so unendurably unhappy? We meet very late, to be very happy and yet very miserable!"

"Never mind: I can't think of better happiness than serving you. Let me live with you

and spend my last days with you ". " If you are earnest about it, be it so! and praise be to God!" "I am quite earnest" and she flung herself on him, kissed the very sores and with her tears washed them.

Of the efficacy of human spittle and human tears we have heard much. I should be proud to record that he was wholly healed and they both lived happily.

But alas! What a world is this we live in! Why did God create rascals, fat burly scoundrels with blunt up-turned noses looking like pigs, feeding like pigs and rolling about to the annoyance of happy and peaceful lives and to their own utter and ultimate ruin!

In the peaceful times that we speak of, there was a big torch-light dacoity and all the vigilance of the Killedars of the police failed to trace the culprit to his place of refuge. One of the Daroghas—as the Head Constables were then called—eager to distinguish himself led a posse of constables into Eagle Rock Garden and rudely demanding admittance was resisted by the servants of Col. Flanagan. He forthwith in the zeal for detective duty suspected the dacoit to be there and slew the men and pressed forward; slew with the same blind fury and unthinking ferocity lovely Bi Fatima and then in horror stopped short.

I can only picture to you the rage of old Col. O'Flanagan when I say that the old lion rushed out on the Darogha, trampled him into a paste, rolled him into a pellet, flattened him into a cake and stretched him into a cable by the time you have taken to read this or I to write it. Richly deserved!

But alas! this supreme effort, took toll of the last atom of energy left in the old man and he fell down exhausted never to breathe or fight again.

To this day, if you are a friend of the owner of the garden, you could go to the foot of the rock and by a secret winding passage reach the cave where lie lovingly entwined the bones of O'Flanagan and Bi Fatima, outlasting the flesh that covered, the life that animated and the hearts that beat within those stately temples of the God of Love!

THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN OF HOGENAKKAL

Hill tribes are hard to subdue; when subdued, the conquest is hard to maintain; and in the improbable if not impossible event of such a maintenance, the game is not worth the candle.

In the listless days of old, when every petty chieftain weary of *ennui*, said "Let us go forth and conquer a kingdom," even as one might say "Let us go forth and have some fun," there was in the hills bordering on the Cauveri at Hogenakkal, a highland chieftain known for his beauty and prowess, the gift and the glory of a long line of ancestors, famed for their might and majesty. The lofty-forehead was the insignia and sign-manual of nature's nobility. The shapely Roman nose was the embodiment of power and authority and unquestioned command. The broad shoulders and the stately figure were the sign and symbol of strength and splendour of manhood.

He wore his hair long and the long locks as they lay upon his back when he dried them at a roaring wood-fire after a refreshing bath at the water-fall, made the heart of many a maiden sink in envy of his beauty. Like other mountaineers, stiff of neck and knee, he never bent even before the elements but walked straight in, to his depth in the water and came out.

His chief ambition was to rule undisputed over the hills and the regions at the foot, far as the eye could see from the summit. One of his ancestors so took a survey of the realms round about and spoke some wild words disrespectful of the deity, who in His wrath fixed him fast in stone, in that colossal and gummata-like figure you see at the summit of the southern range. He is Perumthalai Peruvazuthi.

His son Irumporai when young was sought to be destroyed by his enemies. Two of his father's trusted lieutenants carried him one night to be taken across the Cauveri to a place of safety. The late rains had heightened the water and made the current violent. No one could make himself heard because of the noise and roaring of the water.

The bark of the *Marutha* tree so abundant all along the banks was peeled and on a piece of it was written a message and wrapped round a bit of stone it was flung over and the men on the other side reading it came to the rescue and saved the child. It grew under the fostering care of Cheraman Thagadur Erintha-Perun-cheral-Irumporai and it was from this foster father that young Peruvazuthi came to be called Irum-Porai.

Cheraman had treated him as his own son and trained him in all the arts of war and peace

and before being sent across again to his own domains, young Irum-Porai was taken to an ancient temple in the heart of the forests, stately and vast and towering with a hundred columns, there in an awe-inspiring grove still redolent of the sanctity of ancient days—*horrendum silvis, et religione paretum*—he was solemnly sworn to stand by his foster-father in peace and war, to be faithful to him with the last drop of his blood and the last gasp of his breath.

Thagadur which is Dharmapuri now, was then ruled by the famous Athigaman, brother of the poetess Auvvai. He was lord of the people called *Mazhava*. It has nothing to do with Marava. Legendary lore apart, he was so valorous that he fought against seven kings and won wide domains for himself. The Chera King, Cheraman was one of those who had lost a portion of his territories and vengeance was brooding in his mind. His son young Cheraman and his foster son, Irum-Porai had both been sworn in to recover the lost territories. It is at this juncture that our story begins.

It was a season of festivity such as we find described in Silapathigaram. Indra the God of the celestials was invoked and the whole city of Thagadur was *en fete* and though it was an annual event, men came flocking from far and

near, as if each time was the one opportunity of their life!

The two young fellows, Irum-Porai and Young Cheraman, young and adventurous went forth disguised to participate in the festivities, albeit that their lives were at stake in the enemies' land. Indeed King Cheraman said he would have such festivities in his own land and begged the two fellows hard never to venture into the hands of the enemy. At the time of the festival he kept them constantly under his eye: but this provoked the youngsters to burst all restraint and rush into freedom, so that on the last day of the festival they were not to be found and Cheraman, the King, was disconsolate.

The young fellows dressed as country bumpkins wended their way through the many shops that exhibited many kinds of wares a market being an essential accompaniment of every festival.

It was a full-moon night vying in brightness with the day and they walked amid the variously adorned stores, the tall-towering mansions, where the windows were as fawn's eyes, passed the fascinating quarters of foreigners mostly Greeks, the streets where scents and sandal-paste and flowers were sold; the mart where soft silk and thick wool were exposed for

sale; also the dainty delicate shawl made of rats' hair. There were shells and corals and beads exposed to view as at the present time in the long corridors of Rameswaram temple. They passed the shops where salt and spices and drinks and dainties of the table were purchasable; where specimens of carpenters', brass smiths' and goldsmiths' work took the eye; watches which marked divisions of time each of twenty-four minutes' duration! clocks that struck the same *naligai* periods, such as one finds left as a relic in the Sankara Nainar temple in the Tinnevelly District; drums of all sizes and shapes; musical instruments, recorders and wind instruments of an infinite variety.

Men rode on horses and elephants and the bells hung from the neck or the sides of the animal gave warning to the pedestrians to keep out of harm's way. There were those who had lost the bells or forgot to fit them up. They were a nuisance with consequences painful all round. The poet Kapilar was so trodden on and he spoke or sang his curse on all who ride without bells on horses very like Horace cursing the man who planted the tree that nearly crushed him to death. Chariots rattled through the wide streets.

The very avenue trees were used as pillars and shops were marked off. The noise of

buyers and sellers was incessant and excruciating to tender neeves.

There were devil dancers, such as still carry on in the West Coast, particularly in South Kanara. There were rope dancers and acrobats who trod under foot the straight bamboo, while the curved one stood higher than the crown of Kings being worked into the Royal palanquins. There were circus-men, mostly out-landers, supposed to be Afghans, who trained little children to be supple enough to be bent into a hoop and slim enough to pass through iron railings. This was a preparation to get the children into Hindu Temples to get through the iron doors and steal the costly temple jewels.

There were men who rode cock-horses and resembled at close view a sort of centaur half-horse, half-man ; only in the Greek centaur the other half of each creature was absent. Here both the animals were in tact the man fitting a dummy horse to his waist by passing himself through a vertical hole in the centre and keeping the horse's head in front of him and the tail behind him. Instead of the horse bearing him, he bore the horse at waist level and went through jaunty and jerky movements to keep up the versimilitude of riding.

Irumporai and young Cheraman walked about in disguise drinking in the delightful show

until at last they came to a place, where bullocks were tethered, hundreds of pairs, for sale. Such cattle marts you see to this day at Kalugumalai on the road to Etyapuram from Koilpatti. Bright white oxen with glossy skin and heavy rolling dewlaps and sharp-pointed and polished horns of a chestnut hue and seeming solidity of tinctured ivory were snorting and pawing the ground and the more vicious had copper or bronze rings in their nozzle. At sight of something, one of the bulls took fright, broke loose and went madly careering through the crowd, trampling on some, goring others to death and doing much damage. A number of people kept aiming missiles at the bull but only hit each other, while the bull itself went unscathed and scot-free. A fat man was thrown down and trampled on the stomach and on the eyes, a child was borne off in the veritable dilemma of the bull's two horns. It was then that Irumporai and young Cheraman rushed through the crowds, two shapely and stalwart figures of veritable gods and stayed the mad career of the bull and saved the child.

What was the reward? They were recognised by their peerless and princely aspect and taken before the King who kept them as hostages of the enemy. Athigaman the King had them locked up in a tower and strongly

guarded. He was not unaware of Cheraman's growing disaffection, and not unacquainted with his elaborate preparations not only to regain his lost territory, but also to inflict such injury on Athigaman and his Capital as would avenge his losses in the past. Fortune had put it in his way to deal effectively with the situation.

Meanwhile Cheraman whose fondness for his boy made it difficult for him to exercise the proper discipline over him, fretted over his loss and expedited the expedition on Thagadur that he had long contemplated. At first however he sent messengers to demand the restitution of his son and foster-son. Athigaman politely put off and procrastinated and preparations went forward on both sides.

The prison-house in which Irumporai and young Cheraman were lodged, happened to overlook a courtyard garden where Athigaman's daughter with her maids used to pluck flowers and play at ball. Whether it was so designed or was a mere accident, the reader will guess for himself.

Then by an unexpected but not unusual event, Irumporai who had sworn to avenge himself on Athigaman, fell in love with Athigaman's daughter Mangayer-Karasi,—*the queen of all maids*, and was entangled in a deeper captivity than ever before. Like King James of Scotland

he began inditing a *Kingis Quhair* or the King's book. He did not sing

> "Ah sweet are ye an earthly creature
> Or fairy thing in form of nature?"

but used rather the language of Oriental adoration and admiration, calling her,

> "The gem that was not born of the mountains
> The pearl that was not born of the ocean,
> Rare as the right-lobed chunk;
> Sweet as the sugar-cane, fragrant as seeds"

and so forth.

This won for him the love of the lady and the largest consideration from her father. He enjoyed the maximum of freedom. His life was one golden dream from dawn to dusk!

But..................,

> "The wine is bright at the goblet's brim
> Where the poison lurks beneath"

and lurking somewhere in the background of all this happiness, was the hatred of Young Cheraman, once his inseparable bosom friend, now his bitterest, deadliest enemy.

II

"Let me remind you once again brother, of the sanctity of a solemn oath taken in our ancient and hoary forests," pleaded young Cheraman.

"Do not vex me so brother, if you really ove me," replied Irumporai.

"Oh but for my love of you I should not be so solicitous of your welfare and warn you of the consequences of breaking your oath."

"Then I wish you won't love me for I should be spared all the threats and imprecations."

"Do not put me off lightly by juggling with words! you owe a duty to yourself and however negligent you be of that, I shall insist on your doing your duty by my father!"

"Your father! oh yes. I shall do my duty by him, by loving him and revering him all the days of my life as if he were my own father! but as for the oath, it was you know something of a joke."

"A joke! how lightly you speak of a solemn oath as a joke; perish in your contempt of the Gods. Perish unpitied for breaking a solemn plighted word; you said you would never compromise with the enemy but serve my father with your life."

"Did I? how unfair to get all that promise from an unthinking lad? New times teach new duties. I can serve my foster-father better by bringing about amicable relations between himself and his quandom foe."

"Sophistry: mere soul-destroying sophistry: perish in your self-conceit."

"Well then, when I have perished you will have no one to curse."

That was the end and the last of many painful conversations between young Cheraman and Irumporai. They never met afterwards except in the field of battle.

King Athigaman rejoicing in the growing intimacy between Mangayer-Karasi and the young Irumporai had slackened his watch and ward over the two princely prisoners. Young Cheraman took advantage of it and fled to his father who, staying his hand out of fear for the safety of his son, now set forth with his four-fold force of foot, horse, chariots, and elephants.

Cheraman was not so much as missed in the palace and until the cloud of dust in the far horizon showed the hostile army on its march, nobody suspected any invasion. On the contrary, preparations for a grand wedding were going forward and the idea of a war and consequent bloodshed was farthest from the minds of every one. Then at night the Brahman scout tender than a creeper walking painfully along spoke a few words that gave news of a hostile attack. The draw-bridge was raised and the portcullis dropped and the elephants got ready for the battle.

There is a Hindu superstition that a Hindu should not take leave of his wife when going out anywhere, least of all when going out into battle. Such a man never returns alive. Young Irum-

porai bade a quick adieu to Mangayer-Karasi and rushed forth to the field of battle, foremost in the front ranks so that sight of him might stay the hand of the invading host. Young Cheraman was likewise at the head of the attacking force and when he caught sight of Irumporai he fell upon him and hacked and hewed him to pieces. The victory so intoxicated King Cheraman's men that they rushed forward slaying whomsoever they met, and one more bloodthirsty than the rest rushed upon and killed King Athigaman himself.

Of Mangayer-Karasi's self-immolation in the fire, of Cheraman's tears shed over Athigaman the Great, and the weeping and the wailing, and the sorrow and the grief, it would be impossible to give an adequate account.

Black elephants speared and shedding blood looked like brown rocks over which mountain torrents flowed; crows that fed on the dead looked like crow-pheasants,—so brown were their wings; their beaks covered with coagulated gore showed occasionally like king-fishers. The elephants uprooting chariots and lifting up the chariot wheels seemed like hills whereon the radiant sun rested awhile. The dying and the dead were mingled in one heap; powerless to extricate themselves the wounded rose only to be trampled down by horses in a frightful

stampede and have their eyes gouged out by their broad heavy iron-shod hoofs. Trunks of elephants trailed like king-cobras and the tusks struck the ground like silver ploughs. Men stumbling over the dead raised themselves with the ivory tusks which strewed the field in wild profusion. Women came to claim the dead and searching for their kindred raised up only those wounded in front fighting bravely. They discarded and disclaimed those who were wounded in the back running away from the battle.

Great as was the wailing in Dharmapuri, that at Hogenakkal was greater. The young hope of the hill tribes had perished; tended carefully against Athigaman's enmity, he fell fighting for him and fell by the hands of young Cheraman whose fraternal love turned to fierce hate. If young Cheraman wanted to marry Mangayer-Karasi he was defeated in his intents by her *sati*. If he wanted to avenge his father, he displeased him more than ever for he—Great Cheraman—had a large heart that could have forgiven Irumporai and forgive even Athigaman. He believed he was satisfying the gods by sacrificing one who slighted a solemn oath. Of how the gods were pleased we are not made aware; but young Cheraman never lived long to enjoy his father's throne. Of Irumporai they still tell the tale how hand in hand with Mangayer-Karasi he walks

over the high hills at dawn with radiant footsteps that never touch the ground, wrapped in a halo of glory that shows how the gods themselves pity the lovers and give them the Eternity of Immortal Love.

MUNIAPPEN OF METTUR

Et nunc servat honos sedem tuus:

Still thine honour guards thy resting place.

Salem might be looked at from many points of view. Some regard it merely as the place whence they get good mangoes: others as the place where they find monkeys, hill temples, good roads and tamarind avenues. To the pious, its soil is sanctified as the abode of many saints and sages, Sanatkumara and Sarabhanga, Kapila and Gautama, Bodha and Vasishta and many others. From the point of view of the epics, Salem has been rendered holy by the sacred feet of Sri Rama. It has been the theatre of exploits recorded in both the epics. It may also be regarded as the land of Muniappa, whose baked and painted statues of pottery are set in every village, either in solitary grandeur as at Edapadi, or with another as at Rasipur, or with two others at right-angles to him as seen most often. The pictures of His Imperial Majesty are not more scrupulously hung in elementary schools than are those statues, a third as much again, of Muniappa set up in every village throughout Salem.

II

At Mettur, in the very centre of the head-works is the same Muniappa. Not age-long and

ingrained superstition, not the villagers' love of baked and painted deities, can account for the presence of Muniappen in a city of modern times, evoked with the Bank Cheque book as with Aladdin's lamp, and laid down by Town-planning experts, with all the conveniences of a purified water supply and electric lights. The deity—for Muniappen is worshipped and this story will show how eminently worthy of worship now and ever and by all mankind—sits on the bank of the surplus channel beside the smaller bridge betwixt the dam itself and the great Cauveri bridge and looks towards Salem side. If he were merely a creature of the Engineers indulgently allowed to exist, the spot at which he sits and the side that he faces are un-understandable. The most natural place would be on the dam itself, at the top or at the foot or on the sides like the Terminal Gods of the Romans, like Ellappan and Ellamma, the local God and Goddess of boundary lines. The most natural direction to face would likewise be the dam itself to protect it or towards the town to bring prosperity to it. No; Muniappa sits there to see the dam finished and at the same time, to see that the lower riparian owners are not deprived of their proper supply of water. He is anxious to see that the water does not run to waste and anxious to see also that there is no scarcity anywhere along the Cauveri.

The incredulous and impatient reader asks "How do you know?" Wait and you will hear; and, judge for yourself after that. Consider meanwhile the next question, the direction he faces. He faces the Salem side. Why? because he was once a king in Salem and the prosperity of his people was his prime concern. The Cauveri flowing past his domains suddenly disappeared into the earth at Hogenakkal. The wheel of Vishnu or perhaps only a meteorite had cut through the earth and the river went down the chasm leaving only the "smoke" of watery vapour! The pious king anxious to see that the waters were made available to men, made the most tremendous sacrifice and being told what was demanded, jumped into the chasm to block up the hole and the Cauveri re-issues from below the point and flows on. The voice of the inarticulate millions as they saw their beloved king descend in full panoply down the deep chasm could only be expressed in the language of Arnold about his father,

> "O strong soul, by what shore,
> Tarriest thou now? For that force
> Surely, has not been left vain!
> Somewhere, surely afar,
> In the sounding labour-house vast
> Of being, is practised that strength
> Zealous, beneficent firm!"

That was the *vox populi*, the voice of the people their sure hope, of his rising up somewhere to carry on his good work. So he did, for not being satisfied with what he had done, he was anxious that the precious water he had so saved from flowing out of the earth should not be swallowed up by the all-devouring and insatiate sea. The idea of the dam was his and he was resolved to see it carried out. What shore? but the Cauveri shore!; what sounding labour-house vast, but that of Mettur, where the headworks alone occupy an acreage of eight miles! And as for the sound, go to Mettur and listen to the clamour of engines, the clanking of machinery, the sound of hammers, the whistling of locomotives, the shouting of men and the singing of children; five thousand labourers are at work, and you will see how the prophecy of the people was realised, and realised literally.

The Cauveri-Mettur project has been estimated to cost ultimately seven crores of rupees and to take seven years to complete. It is confidently hoped it will be completed by December 1933.

Could any one contemplate in 1926—seven years after the Great War and its calamitous cataclysmic effects on world finance, from the effects of which we have not yet recovered—the awful expense, would any mortal venture on

it, unless driven on by Spirit force and the urgency that each coin in King Chola's hoard of seven crores carried with it, of being utilised only for the purpose for which it had been earmarked?

III

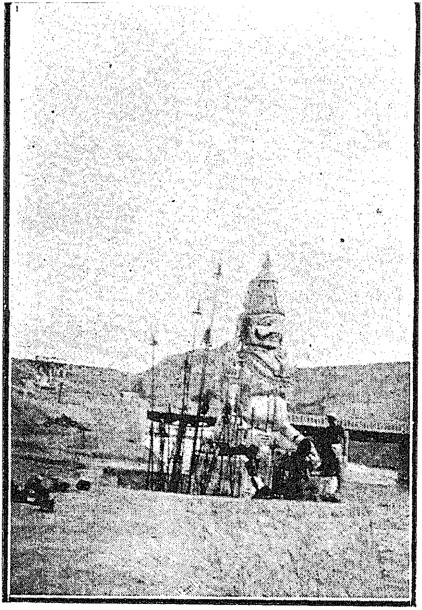
Mettur lies on both sides of the Cauveri—partly on Salem and partly on Coimbatore soil and yet the place belongs for administrative purposes to Salem. An effort was made to constitute it into a separate district but it took the cow's tail progress, shrinking rapidly from district to sub-division, from sub-division to taluk, and from taluk to sub-taluk and is now merely a city attached to Salem. This further corroborates why a Salem king sits down at the head-works, facing Salem side.

Muniappa is either *Muniappa* or *Nuniappa*—some Nattukottai Nakarathars still substitute N for M as in *Nuppathu* for *Muppathu* meaning thirty—and either way means the tip or top-lord the chief or the top-god or to use English slang the top-dog, the All-Father, God of Gods. When he sits with another, it is said to be Maha Vishnu, Brahma being left out for his sin of lying. When he sits with two others, they are the other two members of the Trinity "Sit thou at my right hand" then sits one: "Sit ye at my left hand"! then the two sit side by side to the left of

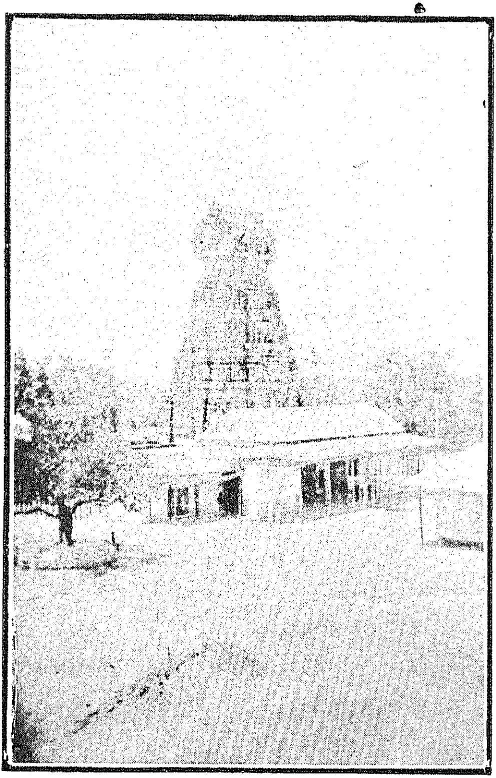
Muniappa, the Lord of Lords. Others say it is King Chola with his two ministers. One of them was a Greek of the Syracusan Archimedean type and the other a malayali. These are said to account for the presence to-day a large number of European Engineers and the usual contingent of Malayalis on the staff.

Whatever it be, what attracts the attention of the pious pilgrims to Mettur is not the dam; stupendous as it is, it merely lies on one side, as a stately background; not the two towers that cost 12½ lakhs each, they are mere tall sentinels guarding the King's gates; not the city that lies betwixt the two protecting ridges as between the fort walls of a city of the Gods; not the patient earth or the propitious Goddess Cauveri flowing majestically past; but simply and solely the centrally seated splendid Chola King, whose tremendous spirit-force, not exhausted by the sacrifice at Hogenakkal doth here on the Cauveri shore, at Mettur, in that sounding labour-house vast, practise unsquandered strength, zealous, beneficent, firm.

Prisca fides facto, fama perennis. Faith in the tale is old, but its fame is everlasting.



Muniappan (Page 57)



Kalipatti Temple (Page 63)

KUZHAKALAN OF KALIPATTI

Kalipatti, two miles from Attyampatti, two miles from Mallasamudram and fourteen miles from Salem, is an important pilgrim centre. Every Thai-Pusam, many pilgrims gather here. There is also a large cattle fair at the time.

The Thai-Pusam fell this year on February 9th. There are interesting facts about the temple and the place which are sought to be set down in the conversations below and the story accompanying.

"You don't have a Chandi Keswara in your temple, to register the names of worshippers?" asked the investigating officer of the *Pujari* of Kalipatti.

"No" replied the latter, "we don't have that Registrar of the Gods. But all the same I know whether Kuzha-Kalan has come or not."

"How?" "He always leaves some mark behind."

"Where?" "In the offertory."

"That is interesting; You mean to say he writes a letter and posts it in the offertory, cheating the Gods and defying mankind."

"Oh, no; I never said that. Your fancy is running riot with you. He always leaves some jewel in the offertory which shows he has been here."

"How do you recognise by the jewel? What is extraordinary about it?"

"Nothing except that it is my own property. The rascal manages to steal my child's neck or ear-ornament and roguishly deposits it in the offertory. Do I not know the jewel that I have made this year for my children or grandchildren?" "It is a mercy the blackguard does not harm the children." "So I think and am thankful for such a mercy, but the token is unmistakable."

"Shall we not get close to the offertory and watch?"

"The offertory is not an open one, for fear offerors should be tempted to take away more than they deposit. It has just a small hole at the top and as thousands of pilgrims have to deposit in the course of a day, we have more offertories than one." "So even you don't know when he comes and deposits and know of his having come only after the offertories are opened?"

"You are right."

"But I am as far away from any clue as ever."

"That is your luck;" "Please make the offertory one." "I shall, to please you and if it is of any help to the State, "Do." That was a police Inspector and he spoke a hundred years

ago and you see only one offertory to-day. Then an Inspector of Schools, only the other day, was interviewing the venerable holder of the office of the priest at the Kalipatti temple.

"What an idea that the offertory should be an open one!"

"Yes, that was funny—the same gentleman would have requested that the dacoit should openly hand himself up."

"He should have asked for an Oracle from the temple."

"Alas, oracles ceased with the founder!"

"With Laxmana Gounder?"

"Yes: with Laxmana Gounder. He sat at this spot and the divine afflatus made him speak in an inspired manner the language of any enquirer."

"Was not Palaniappa Gounder, his son, also an inspired man?"

"I think not! though I find it so recorded in the Gazetteer. That is a mistake and there is no end to the mistakes these gazetteer writers embody in their books. In fact much of what happened to Laxmana Gounder has been attributed to Palani Gounder and the date of the founding of the temple brought down to the last generation."

"There is a certain love of antiquity among our people coupled with a love of marvel that

westerners look askance at. They are frightened by our ten-headed kings, a hundred feet high with reigns six hundred years long."

"But this is a matter vouched for by tradition. The temple is a hundred and fifty years old."

"Is there anything marvellous about it?"

"Yes, this pillar that you see, props up a cross beam of stone, that had a toad in it. No one knew it. But the founder, when the building was completed, asked the prop to be put up, in-artistically as it seemed and interfering with the symmetry as it does, but anticipating by one hundred and thirty-five years the crack that came off fifteen years ago when the toad within the stone died."

"Marvel upon marvel! Is this true?"

"I speak to you inside the temple and speak to you of what is vouched for by stone-masons, as usual in stones encasing toads. When the toad dies, the stone cracks. It did fifteen years ago and the founder had foretold it long, long ago."

"You know anything of this Kuzhakalan?" Yes and here is his story:—

The road between Kalipatti and Tiruchengode is as lonely and as thief and robber-infested as any in the whole district. In the pre-bus

days, there was not a festival in either place or marriage anywhere betwixt and between, that was not the occasion for a daring dacoity. Kuzhakalan, the notorious dacoit held sway over the region and ruled over it as his demesne.

The piety of a dacoit is a problematic if not a paradoxical affair. It is not marvellous that a man turns dacoit, but it is a matter for surprise if he believes in divine sanction for such nefarious warfare on society and persists both in dacoity and temple-worship. You may interject some temple trustees have been dacoits. Perhaps so. But a regular professional dacoit praying for success and offering a portion of the loot to the deity, making the temple a conscious or unconscious receiver of stolen property is a marvel. Religion is used as a cloak for so many things; that it should be used to cover dacoity is passing strange. Saint Nicholas among Christians is the patron of thieves. Kuzhakalan was a dacoit on the heroic scale. He himself was not cast in heroic proportions of limbs or figure. They were rather short and deformed and hence his name. But he was a pious soul. Like Jambulinga Nadan the notorious dacoit whom the missionaries of Tinnevelly have sought in pamphlets to prove to have been a pious Christian, this man was a professed Hindu and a confirmed temple-goer.

He was an adept in disguises and walked on stilts to make up for his natural defects and dwarfish size. He had also put the seat of his life outside his body. He had put it inside a rock, in fact in the toad within the rock. Meleager was vouchsafed life only until a log of wood then in the fire was completely consumed. His loving and intelligent mother drew it out of the fire, quenched the flame and locked it up safe, so that her son might never die, at least so long as that log of wood remained unconsumed. How she deliberately threw it later into the flames and Meleager's life ebbed away is Greek story and exquisite English drama. *Vide* Atlanta in Calydon of Swinburne. It is also reported of Chinese black magic that such marvels are wrought, particularly to save the sailors and pirates from the danger of drowning. Often a goldfish tended with care by the sailor's wife on land, kept the sailor safe in water, and no accident however terrible could affect him. But what an idea to make so short-lived a thing as a fish to determine the life of a man!

Kuzhakalan happened one day to feed a wandering fakir and the grateful man gave him the secret of so preserving his life, in fact put his life inside a neighbouring rock. Kuzhakalan tended it carefully. But once when he was long away, the stone was quarried for

repairs to the neighbouring temple. Kuzhakalan on return from his expedition, sought the stone and traced it finally to the cross beam near the Flag-staff of Kalipatti Kandaswami temple. His attendance at the shrine became ever after very regular. His prosperity in his business was ever on the increase. He defied the Police and dared the impossible. He threw himself from the top of the rocks when evading pursuit and fell soft as if angels or devils had borne him lightly and broken his fall. He dived into water and moved like a submarine going in at one side and coming out at another, working through any hole in any huge rock. He set fire to villages and walked through the fire unhurt, for he bore a charmed life. That he lived well over 135 years and died fifteen years ago we know. There may be others who bear the name and seek to terrorise by virtue of it. But the man whose seat of life was in the toad in the stone, was known to exist for 135 years as testified to by the original founder and died as we all know 15 years ago.

"What did he die of?"

By the death of the toad, in whom was the seat of his life. He was far away from those who could pursue him, in the deep caves of Kanjamalai, in the halls of nature with their many secret openings in many directions. The

lamb and the peacock had been roasted; arrack was simmering in the pot, when with a sudden cry, with a splitting headache he rolled down and died, precisely at the very minute that the stone cracked, the water flowed out and the toad died. Well has Rossetti sung of

"The toad within the stone
Seated while time crumbles on
Which sits there since the Earth was cursed
For man's transgressions at the first.
Which living through all centuries
Not once has seen the sun arise;
Whose life to its cold circle charmed
The Earth's whole summers have not warmed
Which always withers the stone
Be flung sits there, deaf, blind, alone
Aye, and shall not be driven out
Till that which shuts him round about
Break at the very master's stroke
And the dust thereof vanish as smoke
And the seed of man vanish as dust."

But that it should have been chosen to be the seat of a man's charmed life, would seem a fairy tale to all, who have not been to Kalipatti and not seen the stone for themselves nor heard of the daring exploits of Kuzhakalan!

THE TIGER-TRAP HILL

The Tiger-head that long adorned P........... Hall at Kalipatti had in its severed and stuffed condition as long a tale behind it, if not longer, than the one that nature had appended to the animal when it was alive. A mud specimen badly daubed over has since taken its place, no tiger having been caught in recent times. But ten years ago, it was an excited party that went to catch a thief and came by the tiger instead !

Tiger-Trap hill as the hill is now called, was once known as *Thuththi-Karadu* or Zinc-Hill. At the time magnesite works were established in Salem, Zinc works were started at Zinc-Hill and a certain quantity was quarried and smelted, but it did not pay ; the enterprise failed and was abandoned. Like the man who attempted to find a room and left only a hole in one side of the main-guard gate, Trichinopoly, these Zinc-workers left three holes or caves which became in course of time the retreat alike of thieves and of tigers.

Whenever sheep and cattle were found missing, people took a trap and set it at the mouth of the cave where they suspected the tiger to have taken lodgment. They waited for nearly fifteen days, the maximum period during which a tiger can manage without drink and

then when it entered the cage in sheer desperation, well, the tiger was caught and disposed of, according to the fancy of the catcher. If any articles of household use were stolen and the footprints of a man with plenty of nails to his country-sandals led in the direction of the Tiger-Trap cave, a posse of village watchmen surrounded the caves and beat up the whole area to catch the thief.

There were times when the villagers went in search of the one and caught the other. The tiger at P...........Hall was so caught and thereby hangs this tale.

Kuzhakalan of Kalipatti of whom you have read in another story was one day regaling himself inside one of these caves when he became aware of much noise and shouting all around. The villagers were in search of a petty thief who had absconded with a *lota* or *chembu* or other article of small price but of much domestic use and value and so common that identity was almost impossible. The thief was not on Zinc-hill but had evidently escaped in the direction of Mallasamudram or Tiruchengode. But the local detectives were resolved to beat up the hill for him. In so doing, they started the tiger which pounced on Kulla-Mukkan the foremost man and mauled him beyond recognition.

The thief was no longer the villagers' concern but the tiger, and they set the trap in front of the cave where they suspected it to be. Within a day they heard the trap-door come down with a heavy thud and they were sure the tiger was caught. Men ran at once into the village to set up posts to bait the tiger. Spears were sharpened, chains were forged and the whole village came pompously forth to fetch the tiger down.

Then at last they found it was Kuzhakalan crouching inside very much at his wits' ends. Meanwhile the less responsible but more curious mob poked into other holes and started a real tiger at unexpected sight of which, the crowd dispersed helter-skelter. One panic-stricken man too fat to run, suddenly lifted the door of the cage in which Kuzha-Kalan was and as he got out, himself got in to be out of reach of the tiger. Kuzhakalan escaped. The man who got in was a man from Bajpe, South Kanara, sometime watchman in the Travellers' Bungalow there.

There the local water-fall that drops over a longitudinal section of a palmyrah trunk is situate in an area infested by tigers. The District Board once very kindly provided a long trap and a very substantial bait in the shape of a pound of mutton. It proved a greater bait to the hun-

gry and half-starved watchman himself than to the tiger which rarely got a chance. Then came nemesis sure but a certain and one night the watchman was carried off, some say by a ghost, others by the tiger. His successor was equally weak in the matter of the bait but more sagacious in the matter of safety. He took the bait inside the cage, ate it up and slept inside, not very comfortably indeed but with absolute safety from all tigers and crept out of the cage early in the morning lifting the door lightly. It was he or one such as he that helped Kuzhakalan to escape. The trap-door three times heavier than the one at Bajpe, yielded to the combined efforts of two men, one of whom Kuzhakalan got out and the other the Bajpe man got in.

The inside of the cage was all right so long as the tiger-scare continued, but after a time, it felt uncomfortable. It was thrice as long as Anstruther's cage that you find in the Madras Museum but only two-thirds as wide. The man had got in head-foremost which was contrary to his Bajpe habit by which he crawled in foot-foremost. His hands were not free to operate nor could he turn round to get at the door. His legs had free play enough, but the trap door was, as we said already, thrice as heavy and required at least two desperate men or three to four ordinary men to lift it.

Nobody came near, excepting the tiger that occasionally walked round and sniffed at the man. But things could not long be at this standstill. The Attayampatti police wired for reinforcements and the Superintendent of Police was himself on the spot. A lamb was pinned to the ground by the ear and occasional rifle shots whizzed past. The man in the cage shouted for help and after much ridiculous and unnecessary caution, men approached the cage and released the man. Released, did I say? No, they took him into Police custody to learn how he happened to be in that situation.

Meanwhile the tiger fighting against tremendous odds felt the unfairness of so many people attacking a solitary unprotected creature and taking to instinct took sanctuary at the Perumal temple at the top. How it was found the next day at the Kalipatti temple, let those explain who explain away all facts. Chased from even there, it fled to where a few women were at work pounding paddy. One of them a widow, whose husband had been mauled by the tiger, with one stroke of the pestle given desperately, in self-defence and with unconscious retribution, felled the creature to the ground, which conforming to the usual practice of dying tigers, took a leap in the air and flung itself in front of P............Hall.

How the tiger was propped up on posts and taken round in a procession and how people made offerings thereto in cash and kind, all of which went to compensate the widow, is well-known and recent history with which every child in Kalipatti is acquainted. The tiger's head itself a trophy of a woman's heroic achievement was stuffed and set up on the wall. But the gnawing tooth of time and the defects of the tanner's and the taxidermist's art made the once glorious head most unsightly, more so than even its inartistic and thoroughly hideous substitute!

"The Fakir must be a very devil or in league with him."

"He has eluded us in a most mysterious manner".

"I thought I saw him disappear just behind that bush. In any case he cannot be far away from here. A good, diligent search should still reveal his hiding place."

"Oh we have searched for him up and down and everywhere".

"Let us rest now; and resume our search early to-morrow morning."

"By then, the bird would have flown over a hundred and odd miles of wooded country."

"We will take our chance."

That was the last word and the band of Police-wallahs, began lighting their cigarettes, lighting their cigars and pipes and some lighting fires to cook their food, as they wanted to retire early to bed, so that they could rise up early and begin their search the next morning.

Daylight dacoities at Kelamangalam, at Royacottah and elsewhere had strung the detective nerves of the Police to such a pitch, that a posse of constables had been on the move for ten days continuously and thought they had rounded off the notorious gang ; but every

moment, everything was slipping through their fingers; they were arresting wrong parties, obviously poor helpless rascals and oftener victims of the dacoity instead of the dacoits! Each day some of their own belongings disappeared, particularly articles of dress and it was rumoured that a man on patrol duty whom they took to be their own, was really one of the dacoits! *A la nuit touts les chats sont gris.* At night all cats look grey and on dark nights there was no distinguishing one man in uniform from another. Dacoits mixed freely with policemen, learnt the secrets of their next move and disappeared with some article or another, including the pocket book of the detective Inspector. Now with considerable effort they were at the Jekkeri Banyan tree and if they could trust their own eyes, Jalal Khan, the Fakir-dacoit had just then run into those bushes about the famous tree.

About a mile from Kelamangalam on the Kelamangalan-Royacottah road, a path branches off south and about a furlong or two is the vast cluster of banyans that constitute the famous Jekkeri Banyan. The central tree was worn out into mere bark with bushes and snake-nests round about, the younger branches taking root and spreading the shade that made the tree famous.

Major Glover, a gallant veteran of the Burmese wars settled down near the tree, about

a furlong or two off. He had chosen the spot as a secluded one as he had taken a muslim wife and wanted to keep out of the grand trunk and military road. His watch was stolen one day; his mother's photo another day and then a lock of hair an English Lady had given him in the long ago. The thief must have had annoyance to the Major more in view than enrichment to himself. Major Glover said something very strong and expressive about the Police of the place and they were resolved to catch the thief at any cost. And now when Jalal Khan was slipping through the fingers like water it happened by an unfortunate accident that the bungalow was burnt down.

This was worse than a hundred thefts and a thousand dacoities. John Glover was indignant. He thought the dacoit gang had set fire to his bungalow and cursed the incompetent police in stronger and more violent language. The bungalow and its belongings were burnt up. Much assistance was not available at night and water was not ready to hand to the few that were on the spot. Many looked helplessly at the magnificent blaze that lit up the landscape for miles around.

It was with difficulty the Major himself could be got out of the burning house. He had retired to bed fully drunk and only the

next morning when he came to his senses was he aware of the extent of the damage incurred and cursed and swore as only military men can.

When the embers were raked up and so much of what could be salvaged was rescued from the flames, there was to be seen the charred figure of a ferocious looking man who was identified by Major Glover as his butler Comali Sundaram and by others was suspected to be the much dreaded Jalal Khan himself!

Comali Sundaram did not come from Comal but was so called because he was picked up from a theatre where he played the part of a buffoon and was subsequently trained and turned into a cook. He had been long with Major Glover who was prepared to give him the best certificate for honesty and fidelity: what secret cause he had later to suspect the Moor to have been familiar with Emilia, is not known and Major John Cuppage, when he called on Major Glover to condole with him on his loss, could identify by the sword cut he had inflicted on the dacoit once, that the so-called Comali Sundaram was Jalal Khan!

The whole world seemed to turn.

The central stalk of the Jekkeri tree was burnt down; so was the bungalow. Careful observers noted a subterranean pathway full of burnt weeds leading from the bungalow and

following it up emerged at the spot where the valiant guardians of public peace, the vigilant upholders of justice had set fire to the tree. So they it was, that through sheer carelessness while lighting a fire at the foot of the tree made the fire race to the bungalow and consume it in the conflagration that caused more harm than many dacoities.

But another path-way led from the tree to a house in Anchetti-Drug and there, in an underground chamber were found the accumulations of a hundred thefts including the pictures and the precious relics that Major Glover had lost. Emerging from there, one rose to the surface into the modest hut of Major Glover's butler—Comali Sundaram!

Anchetti-Drug is a mile away from the Banyan Tree and the underground passage had skylights here and there, recesses in the walls and finally ended in a magnificently furnished chamber. The snake-infested tree had an evil reputation and nobody would go near it. It thus became a convenient rendezvous for the gang of Jalal Khan. A run along one of the underground passages took one to Major Glover's bungalow from which news and unconsidered trifles could be picked up and a run along another of the passages took the thieves to an unpretentious

house where the inmates were obviously busy making blankets out of wool.

Wool clipped from sheep is mixed with a particular kind of earth and pounded with a big rolling rocking stone until the wool becomes quite soft and fit for weaving. Then it is cleaned and spun and woven with a long bamboo shuttle. No one would suspect any of the humble workers to be possessed of much treasure; still less the modest hut of butler Comali Sundaram where people were always busy but always looked thin and miserable. Why dacoits never thrive and ill-gotten wealth never feeds any one are matters of moral philosophy outside the scope of a short story. The more immediate problem was the dual personality of Comali Sundaram alias Jalal Khan, trusted butler of Major Glover and dreaded dacoit of Kelamangalam.

But for Major Cuppage's evidence from the sword-cut and discovery that the subterranean pathways led to, in that chamber where the butler played the grand master, the linking of the two-fold course of life would be impossible and truth would have lain hidden in subterranean ways.

The bungling idiots at the Banyan tree had burnt it down and burnt down the bungalow also; but they put an end to the life of a daring dacoit and gave peace to the afflicted land.

Jalal Khan was chased as far as the Banyan tree but disappeared as fate would have it, not on the Anchetti side, but along the Glover Bungalow side and the racing fire chased an exhausted man who fell down wearied at the bungalow, burnt off his theatrical false beard and revealed in him the dacoit—butler Comali Sundaram!

Major Glover in sheer disgust left for Royacottah where we shall hear of him again.

"Are you alive? Are you all right? Thank God you are saved!" cried with pathetic earnestness Amirunissa Begum Bi as Major Glover hurried out of his burning bed into the open air, slowly came to himself.

The curling black smoke, the whiff of hot air and the crackling sound of the bamboo rafters, were quickly followed up by a bright blaze and a brilliant conflagration which wrapped up in its golden glow the better part of the Bungalow near the Jekkeri Banyan tree and the tongues of flame burst into the bed chamber and licked with the fury of a blood-hound the very bed-clothes. The Begum caught her husband and jumped through the window and so saved him.

"So you have saved me from a death by burns, dear Duckie! How grateful I should be!"

"You saved my life once and this is nothing but my plain duty."

"Yes I saved your life; equally a matter of humanity and plain duty and you have saved mine at considerable risk to your own."

"Let us not bother about it. It is enough you are alive and quite safe! But we will quit this wretched spot and whoever the rascal that

set fire to the bungalow, change our servants completely, shift nearer the military road, get in fact to lovely Royacottah." "We shall! and the sun shall not set over the proposal; we march forthwith."

This was what led to the migration of Major Glover, veteran of the Burmese War from Jekkeri to Royacottah. He built himself a beautiful mansion in the shadow and the shelter of a rocky mound facing the Durvasa Rock of Royacottah.

The military road that runs from Hosur to Krishnagiri *via* Royacottah is one of the most picturesque in all Salem, and if the trampled road could find a tongue like the Talking Oak, it could tell us of the hosts of Haider and Tippu, of Cornwallis and Col. Morrison, of Major Glover and Major Cuppage, who marched and marched again with martial tread and rhythmic movement down the ancient avenue of age-long banyans.

When Lord Cornwallis in 1792 marched an army down the pass of Changama, he halted at many places on the road before he reached Bangalore which he took by storm. The fort wall near the Victoria Hospital, Bangalore, is a protected monument proclaiming the gallant victory of Lord Cornwallis. But the way to Bangalore was disputed all along the line and

it was with the utmost difficulty that provisions could be gathered for the vast army on the march. The possibility of a night attack when the tired army was resting, was alarming but at Royacottah with Aga Jamaluddin, Lord Cornwallis felt he was with a friend and gentleman. After his victorious return, Lord Cornwallis bestowed the Lordship of Royacottah and its vicinity—far as the eye could see, *Bith Mar*—upon Aga Jamaluddin and his heirs for ever!

The Aga managed to live for thirty years unmolested and at last one night one of the younger generation who regarded him as a traitor led a gang of ruffians and having bribed and corrupted his servants got at the Aga and killed him on the spot. His loving wife threw herself between her husband and his murderers and died seeking to save him. The little baby Begum Amrunissa fainted away and to all intents and purposes was also dead. The murder of the devoted ally of the British was keenly felt by a little band of the military encamping in the neighbourhood as an atrocity to be avenged, and at the first news, Captain Glover rushed to the cemetery and took a last look at the stately and dignified face of the Aga.

Then he heard a strange noise in the coffin hard by and a movement of the earth over a new

made grave and digging furiously helped to raise the lid of the coffin in which was entombed little Amirunissa.

Good God! Can any one conceive the horror of being buried alive under the belief of one's being dead and then waking up in the cold cemetery at dead of night and beating upon the lid of the coffin trying to raise it, after thrusting aside the cere-clothes of the dead! Fear of a ghost would drive away the bravest and the unexpectedness of the event would be a bar to any active help. It was Amirunissa's good fortune and Major Glover's good luck that brought him to the cemetery at the time she was struggling with consciousness and attempting to get out of her coffin.

"Are you alive? Are you all-right? Thank God you are saved" cried Captain Glover, as he then was, when he helped the dear dainty girl out of the coffin into the world again. Her saviour fully intended to give her in marriage to some good friend and true ally of the British, a young fellow of her own community, but she made him understand that she hated alike all the "pigs", who had actively or by abetment killed her dear father and would much rather marry her saviour. Besides, she would not be taken back into her community after the strange experience of the grave. They would seek sooner

or later to take her life and she was safest with him. Would he have her ?"

"Most certainly! This is more than I looked for—Praise be to God!"

Then they lived after the Burmese wars in the bungalow at Jekkeri, a furlong away from the Banyan tree, leading a quiet life of happy love. After a while the petty losses were annoying and the burning down of the bungalow was worse and so they shifted to Royacottah to the Glover Mound, opposite to Durvasa's Ashram on the Hosur Road.

"How softly lies the moonlight on the grassy ledge!"

"Not softer than your hands, not softer than your cheeks and not softer and sweeter than your lips."

"Fie! Fie! we are no longer young and cannot talk as if we were wedded yester night."

"Why not? You are as young in my eyes as when I took you out of the grave and took you to my bosom! Oh the worry and the excitement and the trouble and the compensation for it all, the joy at the end of it!"

"Yes it seems to me but yesterday and yet such a long time has elapsed! You, who took me from my grave, will have one day to put me into it. Let it be there, where the moonlight falls softer than any flower!"

"Don't talk of death! And how do you know I shall not predecease you and you will put me into my grave?"

"I don't expect you to outlive me long but I do feel as if I shall be buried with due honours, as befits the Queen of this place!"

"Yes, with Royal honours and a Royal salute! But let us not talk of death! It may not be yet for many and many a year." "If it worries you, I shall not! Only I saw gleaming across the spot, buntings and festoons of gold, glittering in the moonlight. That is Allah's invitation to the good to come to his Paradise."

"Dear me, how you talk! Women have no souls says your Prophet and you seek to get a soul and go with it to the Prophet's heaven and say he is inviting you!"

"That women have no souls is the Christian's view of the Prophet's teaching. Great are the sins your *padres* have committed against our faith and its great teacher!"

"How I have longed that a son of ours should blend in himself the best of each religion and proclaim the new faith to all the world, so that at least Christianity and Mohametanism become one; but God's will be done."

"We accept your gospels but go further. You stop short and blind yourselves to later

developments of the true faith and magnify a prophet into God."

"This is controversy and I am not fit for it. Fight for my faith as for my king, I can; but jaw it out I can't. I leave such matters to women and to Clergymen."

"Will you bury me there under a costly tomb '*habr*' and build an Idgah for the preacher?"

"Pray don't talk any more non-sense of dying. I rather feel old myself and would stave off the visit of the dark messenger as long as possible."

"Do. But I feel the end coming. We have been so happy together, so very happy. Here, dear, your lips on mine and so farewell!"

With tragic suddenness the soul departed and in the afternoon glow with the young moon-light shedding its magic beams on mount and tree, she passed away and Major Glover, heard unaccountable aerial music and saw clear and bright the festoon and buntings of bright shining gold!

"Take me away with you, Amrunissa! Take me away with you! I can't outlive you: I am old and feeble. I can't live without you, my Queen."

After much waiting he took courage, built the small but splendidly wrought tomb you see

on the Hosur-Royacottah road, a furlong away from the present Railroad station and opposite to a rock which bears a rude shamiana of stone-slabs occupying the place of one thatched with lemon grass in which lolled looking at the field below, the King and Queen of Royacottah.

There it stands betwixt the 21st and the 22nd milestones on an elevated spot betwixt a rock carved with Hanuman and an Idgah where *Namaz* or prayer is offered at certain seasons in the year. On one side is the Glover Rock with all its architectural abutments utterly lost and on the other beyond a fertile valley the formidable mount of Muni Durvasa. Betwixt and between lies the highly ornamented grave, where peace broods and silence hovers, stately companions of the immortal dead. The stucco work is hideously white-washed: but the rain washes with tears once more into the glow of early polish the artist's lovely handiwork and so it stands under rich sunlight as under soft moonlight, a sort of Taj Mahal, the tomb of love and beauty and lordship, of past grandeur and buried splendour.

Major Glover and Amirunissa Begum Bi did so much charity and so much good, showed so much kindness to every one and so bound round their heart the grateful hearts of those who lived in that region that, the Begum came to be

regarded as the Good Queen of Royacottah, her tomb was a sacred spot and even the Hindu subjects of the locality carving a Hanuman, consigned to his protection the bones of the noblest woman they had known—"THE GOOD QUEEN OF ROYACOTTAH."

THE "SIDDHAR" OF SIDDHAR HILLS

"Many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods."
W. W.

The Siddhar hills lie two and half miles west of Rasipuram and are still reputed to be the favourite abode of many Siddhars or Mahatmas, who have realised God, and achieved many miraculous powers, including skill in medicine, power to turn base metals into gold, and ability to be immune from death and disease. They are the men who have achieved their hearts' desire, achieved it by hard discipline and the grace of God.

My story is of a so-called Siddhar of Rajapuram, in the days when Rasipur was so called. It was so called within living memory, as will be testified to by title deeds of old houses and also by the records and library volumes of the Middle School that once was and the High School that now is. Consult particularly the precious copy of Dr. John Bradshaw's edition of Milton.

Half way betwixt and between the Siddhar hills and the Salem-Namakal road, is a mound, surmounted at the present day by a single domed shrine with a few tamarind trees. The

mound once bore elaborate battlements and all round it were military settlements extending to the camping ground near where the present Rasipuram-Tiruchengode road cuts the Salem-Namakal road. It said that Captain Wetherall who lent his name to Varadalapuram on the Courtallam Road, transferred to Salem Command, brought with him a devoted contingent of Rajapalayam sepoys and building a fort on the height, settled them in the vicinity. They were allotted fields beyond the camping ground towards the site of present day Rasipur. Indeed the productive wet lands on which paddy and sugar-cane are grown, we owe entirely to the energy and enterprise of these hardy tillers of the soil. Rajus have always been known to be a hardworking race, as hard working if not more than Kammavar Naickers. The Rajus who settled here gave to Rajapuram its name, since corrupted into Rasipuram.

Like Cincinnatus of old, these men were equally deft with the sword and the plough and one of them combined the two and was known as Parasurama. Yet another having a special aptitude for medicine which perhaps the proximity to the Siddhar hills induced, became proficient in surgery and became a Surgeon-Major. We love power only until we taste it and then it palls on all wise men who have anything like

a sense of real values. Ministers and Judges have flung aside the vain baubles and trappings of frivolous authority and turned towards God, with that purity that makes them see Him and that humility which makes them inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.

Our Surgeon-Major, called familiarly and for convenience, merely 'Major' full of queer and old-fangled notions of filial duty and following at some distance great Bhishma of Mahabharata fame, gifted away his youth to his father—who in consequence came to be known as 'Minor'—and with grey hairs on and most of his teeth off, kicked aside the pomp and ceremony of military dignity and set up as a simple ascetic, with hopes of becoming a Siddha, if possible.

You have heard of the eighteen Siddhars, haven't you? One of them was a snake-charmer and under pretence of playing to his snake, he expounded his philosophy and imparted his wisdom, as he had been forbidden by his misanthropic preceptor from instructing that ungrateful creature, man. Another was a weeping philosopher, who wept profusely over the ills of mankind and so bewailing them, taught the way to peace, to happiness and attainment.

Their example induced many people to aspire for wisdom: but some of the neophytes while performing Yoga, ran up their eye-balls so

high as to be sucked into the cranium and others in search of the Philosopher's stone tumbled down precipices and perished.

The Major starting humbly as a botanist began planting a little garden near the lower water-falls. He said, the Lord Krishna bade him in a vision to do so and fancied he had planted the first two trees with His help. Then he walked about in his garden and it struck him that if he wanted roses, he should plant them and so, ere long he put up a number of rose-bushes which hid and drew off attention from the medicinal herbs he was growing.

Like Virgil's old Corycian (Georgics Bk. IV, 127) "as he planted herbs here and there among the bushes, with white lilies about and vervain and slender poppy, he matched in contentment the wealth of Kings and returning home late in the evening would load his board with unbought dainties. He was the first to pluck roses in Spring" and it is these roses we get to-day at Rasipur and little do those who inhale the fragrance and enjoy the sweetness of the roses, remember him whose love and kind thought planted them and still less do they think of those potent herbs that nestle among these bushes.

At the foot of the hills are two *Ichchi* trees that throw a cool and pleasant shade. Some of

the Siddhars used to sit here and converse with the concourse of people who assembled; at other times near the water-falls which are reached up the slope of the hills paved with rubble and rude boulders and rough rocks, where now a masonry platform provides convenient space for a picnic party, they discoursed or sat in solemn meditation. Aswath and Bilva and Ichchi throw their bountiful shade which is said to have a medicinal virtue and thus it was that the fountain-heads of wisdom from the heights, fed and fertilised the plains below!

The water-fall that glides serpentine amid crevices and flows under the ledges of rocks, falls at one spot down a mild depth of four feet into a clear pool. A purifying bath here was in itself bracing, apart from the pure mountain air and the exhilarating and inspiring association of the spot, with memories of the illustrious masters of wisdom who had spent their days here. So under the Ichchi trees—which were the Bodhi trees of the Siddhars—the Major started a school of Ayurvedic medicine and was a head master among the masters of medicine.

One of his assistants anxious to out-do his master went up to the higher falls and is reported to have gone lame ever since. Another slipped down a precipice in search of a herb and the Major sick of such disasters left the hills

though many aver they have seen him occasionally once or twice in recent times.

I believe it, as Siddhars are immortal and possess the secret of an unageing and incorruptible body. I feel quite as sure as any body that I have seen this grey-haired major but let us to the story without more ado.

At the time my story begins, a magician from Malabar, a man reputed to be well-versed in *mantric*, *tantric* and *yantric* lore, came and settled on the hills. He burnt up cart-loads of twigs for the *homa* or burnt-sacrifice and heaped up mountains of flowers. He pretended to hold converse with hidden powers. But the Raju settlers looked on him from the beginning with disfavour. They disliked his easy and lazy ways. They regarded him as one of very evil example and very much to be shunned. They also averred they heard the older Shiddhars crying out their warning to the new-comer to depart.

Their particular aversion was alchemy. The only alchemy they believed in, was by the sweat of their brow winning a golden harvest, of nourishing grain, juicy roots and succulent fruits. They looked on every other kind of alchemy as arrant non-sense and when the never-do-well young men among the Rajus, flocked round the Alchemist, the sterner, older men fairly lost their

patience and were devising means of dealing with this corrupter of their youth.

They looked about them to get at the Major to avert the evil proceeding from the Malayali Magician.

But the Major did not answer their prayers. Perhaps he was upon the Kollis, at Arapaliswaran temple, with his whole frame quivering and fluttering like a piece of cloth in the practice of abstinence and austerities; perhaps he was upon the Bodha Hills, quaffing sugar-cane juice or nectar, quite "careless of mankind." But wherever he was, the tragedy happened which he alone could have averted. For the Rajus had to leave the spot after dismantling the fortifications. They left behind only the temple, since re-edified, the broad camping grounds and the wet lands as their legacy to Rasipuram. How it happened was thus:—

The Malayali Magician dreamt on three successive nights of a large treasure hidden away among the rocks. Taking two of his young Raju disciples with him, he climbed up to the higher water-fall and chanted the famous mantram, "*Kali, Kali, Mahakali.*" It is said that the Goddess Kali appeared in such a frightful form that one of them went mad on the spot and never after recovered his wits and the other caught a chill and a fever which resulted

in *delirium tremens* and finally in a frightful death, full of convulsions and gnashing of teeth and foaming in the mouth. It was this delirious young man who related the story of the Kali appearing and demanding human sacrifice.

The indignant elders now went forth in a body and finding the Sanyasi engaged in meditation, impatient of delay and unable to control themselves, beat him to death with whatever they could lay hands on, anything was a weapon that they could reach and finally heaping up fuel and fallen leaves burnt him up.

They had nothing of the sensitiveness that held back young Hamlet from taking off King Claudius's life while praying. They took the Sanyasi off "in the very purging of his soul, when he was fit and seasoned for his passage." They did not wait "to catch him in an act that had no relish of salvation in it."

Scarcely was this done, than a great cosmic convulsion shook the earth. Streets rolled like waves and the houses crumbled and fell. Even in far off Tiruchengode, first floors crashed into ground floors and the ground floors descended some small way into the earth, resembling under-ground cellars. But here at Rajapuram, not a house was left standing. All the men, women, and children who could crawl alive out of the *debris*, clambered up with broken limbs

and painful effort the little mound which was itself so shaking and throbbing with the earthquake as to shake off most of the old trees to the ground.

Then at long last, came a peace as profound as the storm before was boisterous. One of the men susceptible to psychic influences became suddenly possessed and he declared the Rajus should quit Rajapuram and go back to Rajapalayam.

With tears and regrets at being torn away from their loved homes they departed, demolishing what still remained of the fort. The dust on which we tread now innocently as we go up to Siddhar Hills holds buried underneath, the hopes and homes of those who lived and flourished there long, long ago. *Fuit Ilium.* Troy is no more.

The story is told of one of the sufferers settling down at Ramnad and warning one of the Sethupathis against the sacrilege of burning up saint Thayumanavar, citing as a case in point, that of the "Siddhar" of Siddhar Hills. But as usual in such ill-fated cases, the warning came too late and came very much in vain.

Thus it comes to pass, that as the seasons change and the winds shift and veer, names change and places take on a new aspect and develop new associations. Old memories perish with an older generation and the vestiges of an ancient civilization lie buried among the *debris* of an anti-diluvian time.

RAJA GOUNDAN ROCK

A young malayali aspirant to historic fame, could see his clansmen only in the light of oil-mongers and washermen and devised a history, doubtless fanciful, of alternating success in internecine wars, which finally resulted in a large number of the latter class migrating. It is certain, however, and pretty well-established, that the earliest immigrants from Malabar into Salem District, were not the Reserve Police, but the washermen and washer-women of Tiruchengode. It is said they brought their Nambudri Guru with them and a representative of that line to this day is said to live on the slopes of Tiruchengode hill, to discharge the duties that the Nambudri had taken on himself.

Exercising a similar right but on a feudal basis was the local chieftain, Raja Goundan whose rock, called Raja Goundan rock, lies a mile west of the hill temple of Tiruchengode. He was said to possess extraordinary *mantric*, *tantric*, *yantric* powers and as some people are said by chanting *Syamala Dandakam* to get the service of Goddesses and Gods, *Thasya girdevatha kimkari*, he had secured the services of the Lord of serpents, Adisesha.

By a curious curse—how incurred it is not clear—this highly favoured individual was not to

have an abode on earth. Whenever he built one, it collapsed. Masons were hard to get though he was a Rajah and even forced labour was unable to accomplish what every petty subject enjoyed—the comfort of a house. Such is compensation in life and the curious set-off with which exceptional good fortune is handicapped in this wonderful world!

But by virtue of his ability to command Adi-Sesha, he got him to form himself into a base for him to build his palace on; the palace on such a foundation was the marvel of the place. A learned Tamil Pundit explains that the word "Nagam" means elephant, rock and serpent and the Raja moving in a howdah on elephant-back and building his house for safety on a rock, got the Romance of such a story built round him, by the fancy of needy poets who flattered him with comparisons with Maha-Vishnu who floats on the ocean of milk on a bed made by folds of Adi-Sesha. But for the folds in the rock and snake-like formation the whole story might be brushed aside. For yet another reason too, even if it were not true, it would deserve belief, precisely on the ground that Voltaire put forth, that if there were no God, it would be necessary to create one.

All things prospered with Raja Goundan, till flatterers gathered round him and in an evil

moment told him that all the properties of subjects belonged to the Raja. Such flatterers have always existed. Even English Bishops have made such foolish statements. Raja Goundan became anxious to test the truth and value of such a statement and as fate would have it, a malayali doctor had come over with a beautiful wife and the local doctor jealous of the newcomer's fame and popularity began to poison the mind of the Raja and advise him to appropriate the doctor's wife as being too good for a subject and worthy only of a Raja.

Raja Goundan sent for the new doctor. He made him the palace doctor and with sundry hints suggested that the doctor's wife should also reside in the palace. Adi-Sesha gave a gentle shake and one of the palace turrets fell. He appeared to the Raja in a dream and said "You are born a Rajah because of the virtuous deeds you did in your last birth. Don't undo yourself by seeking that foreign woman". Perturbed for a time, the Raja soon forgot the warning and began to negotiate again. Again another turret fell and one deep rut on the rock was marked, marking the path of a snake. The doctor got alarmed and wanted to migrate, but the Rajah in his last desperation, preserving still the forms of law got the local doctor to present a complaint, that the doctor's wife was his wife and

had been unlawfully abducted by the malayali newcomer. He prayed that until the case was decided, the lady may be kept in Court possession or handed over to her lawful guardian, the petitioner.

The doctor was apprehended on a charge of abduction and adultery. False witnesses were put up and the case conclusively proved, that while the petitioner had gone to a neighbouring district, the wife had been run away with and with lapse of time the parties had got sufficiently emboldened to come and live in the very place. The doctor was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment and the complainant getting the wife presented her to the Raja as a thing too valuable for him to possess.

Adi-Sesha was indignant and rolled about in fury till the whole palace was shook off, not a stone left standing, excepting a small shrine, the four walls of which stand, a temple hypaethral and open to sky, like the famous sun-temple at Marhanda, Kashmir! So truth endures, as endures the temple, to this day. "What is good, as God is permanent." But the house and tenant have fallen to ground, a lesson to all mankind to build on virtue. The people round about fled and would not come back to the village, till pressure on Tiruchengode and forgetfulness arising from lapse of time,

made the population spread. So forgetful they became, that they fearlessly built their houses with some of the fallen stones from Raja Goundan's palace.

At Dharmapuri, you will find modern houses built on fort walls raised by Tashil Timmapier, huge mud walls, wide enough to sleep on. At Rajagoundanpatti, you will see likewise houses built of variegated materials some of them boulders with jaggery and chunam cement dating back to the days of the valorous Raja, Rajah Goundan.

And the sermon is there writ on the stone, that even though you build on a rock, falsehood cannot stand and virtue however humbled and harassed, has God's protection! Not merely Draupadi of old could call on Krishna, *Dwarakavasa*, but every one born a woman and taking her stand on chastity could do so, making the greatest king on earth quake and tremble and perish.

THE KOTTAI MARIAMMAN TEMPLE, OMALUR

Omalur once spelt "Womalore" in the days of Kali-Iyer, is held betwixt the two arms of the sonorous Sarabanga river. It was a favourite halting place with the famous Sir Thomas Munro who found it near enough to Salem and at the same time far enough to give him peace and quiet. The greatest thing there to-day is the High School founded by private charity, that of the venerable Kuppusawmi Chettiar of undying fame. But the thing that bulked large a century ago, was the old fort now in ruins, about five furlongs on the Taramangalam road, on the right bank of the Sarabanga west.

At the present moment when all the Banyan trees are radiant with red berries and resonant with the mingled cry and music of many varieties of the feathered tribe and the tamarind trees bear their load of bent fruits and belligerent monkeys, it is most distressing to view the the deserted ruins of this once important Fort.

The Gatti-Mudaliars, the military caste and class of people that came early to the fore in this district, are said to have built that fort; even as it is well-known they were responsible for the building of the many belts of fortification all over the sides of Sankari Hill. Their driving

power was tremendous and tales of their hardness and harshness in taming refractory and rebellious labourers still tingle the ear and make the blood curdle. But they were laying up a legacy of cruelty, which has since resulted not only in the laying waste of their Palace and the loss of their leadership, but also in the extinction of a powerful community, only a remnant of whom remain as a relic of what was once so great.

The tiger banner of Immudi-Gatti Mudaliar floated from the battlements and the Mudaliar himself "the crest jewel of crowned kings," wearer "of the never drying garland," he who "never bowed his head to anybody"—the *Vanangamudi* sat on his famous coloured mat on a corded bedstead, the Achillean, *tre' tois lecheessi* nearly four hundred years ago. His least world was law. Nations quaked, and monarchs trembled in their capitals. That was in 1544 A. D.

One century passed and in 1644, the dynasty older by a whole century, began showing signs of decrepitude and old age.

> "Little of all we value here
> Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
> Without both looking and feeling queer."

The temples of Siva and Vishnu came to be neglected. The fort itself was seldom visited,

all attention being concentrated on the Palace at Amarakundi and more time spent in "chewing bhang, and fondling concubines", things that have at this time become obsolete and unfashionable. Then in 1667 it fell into the hands of Dodda Deva Raja of Mysore. But his hold on it was very precarious. Another century passed and in 1768, the fort was captured by Colonel Wood and Mohamet Ali's troops garrisoned it. It is at this eventful period, we have something of history or tradition and it was then the Kottai Mariamman Temple came to be built.

You see even to this day monkeys get upon the temple tower of the Siva Temple. Mohamet Ali's men emulated this "ancestral" example and began climbing up the temple towers. The Hindus in the neighbourhood looked on in fury and unavailing indignation. One imp of a fellow slipped and broke his leg and the next was stung by a huge tarantula such as they keep in the local High School Museum and a sort of dread crept into their bosoms. But it was only a passing wave of fear and piety. More daring, they later began demolishing a part of the tower itself. Every stroke went into the head of Sergeant Hoare who was in charge and he suddenly rushed to the spot and stayed the hands of the zealous iconoclasts. An image

was clandestinely removed from one of the side shrines. Then began a heavy rain with thunder-claps and formidable portents and a few days later half the camp was down with cholera and the rest with small-pox.

"I told your husband not to let these *melechas* touch the temple tower" said the fortune-teller to the sergeant's wife, "and I tell you, your child will be afflicted with the small-pox to-morrow and you, not long after. Beware even now and clear the Mohametan devils out of the fort."

The sergeant's wife was fairly frightened, particularly as the child developed small-pox; but sergeant Hoare himself was inflexible and could not stand any non-sense. He said he would have the fortune-teller whipped, if she came into the fort again and sent for the Doctor.

Some of the Mohametan sepoys died of the pox and the infection was spreading. Young Hoare's eyes were affected and it was not certain if he would recover. The sight of the beautiful boy unable to open his eyes drove the sergeant's wife mad and catching the infection herself, she also suffered.

Hoare was wild with rage and fury. His first thought was to demolish the temples and the fort and leave for anywhere. His wife

besought him to send for the Gipsy woman. Hoare refused, thinking she was the cause of all the trouble, but yielded at last. The gipsy refused to come, unless she was solemnly promised protection and a good reward.

After much threat and more persuasion and some bribery, she came, shook her head and said there was only one remedy and she was sure it would not be adopted. After much assurance, she said "Build a temple to Mariamman and you will be safe, else you will all perish."

Hoare thought this was a hoax played on him and looked sharply at the visage of the gipsy. He seemed to see in her a man disguised: ah! no, his fancy was distraught. He only said "Give me some proof of good faith and I shall build the temple."

"Dig in the corner of the guard room and you will find such an amount and so much only as is needed to build a temple. This must convince you," said the gipsy and disappeared.

Hoare did dig and did find some money but no hoard, only a handful of gold pagodas of the old Mysore Kings. He announced however his intent to build a temple.

That was enough. The epidemic ceased, as if by a miracle; the boy's eyes opened radiantly, all the clearer for the disease and its purification, and all the neighbouring village came

pouring in to help and the Mariamman temple rose as if by magic; beyond the first few pieces no more of the gold was needed. The modest temple we see was completed and Hoare was sorry he had not built it more elaborately. He threw the rest of the coins into a small pit over which the deity was installed and lo! the gipsy woman, now a Brahmin in all the paraphernalia of orthodoxy, ashes, beads, *Yoga Veshti* and *Kamandals* turned up to take charge of the temple duties!

"Look here, Babu, have you been fooling me? Are you not the gipsy woman?"

"What strange talk! I a woman! Is madness raging about? Can't you see in clear daylight?"

"I do think you are the gipsy! the darned dirty creature that fooled my wife and fooled me, a Christian into building this temple."

"You are mistaken. Do you doubt the gold, do you doubt the prevalence of the disease and your redemption from it? Unless you are mad, stark mad..........."

"Stop, stop! No more of that! I am only a rough soldier and I am no match for the witchcraft of this dirty place. The gold did look eerie and went the way it came! As for the disease and its disappearance, some of the Mohametan blokes over-ate and infected all round!

It is the recovery I can't get over. That is what floors me and fools me!"

"It is all the act of God, O master: you cannot search his ways. They are inscrutable. Only one more prophecy. You will march hence in a week's time!"

"I do or I draw your blood damned gipsy-brahmin," swore Hoare and went his way.

A week after, marching orders were received. There was no humbug about it. Hoare ordered the fort walls to be demolished, being fairly frightened out of his wits and unable to touch either the old temples or the new; and march he did, after shaking his fist at the gipsy-brahmin. "I leave you unharmed as I had promised it: but if I hear of further fooling, I chase you into very Hell."

"You are very courteous, master, Fare-well."

"Tell me now, are you the gipsy or not?"

"I have bidden you farewell!" he said and turned away.

The temples stand to this day; two within the fort—ancient ones of the type one sees at Tanjore with a prominent round tower over the Holy of Holies, very different from other temples, where an insignificant tower is over the central shrine and that over the gate is elaborated into a pyramidical tower;—and one, the

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Mariamman temple, outside the fort limits. Crowds still gather there, defective vision is rectified and lost vision regained. The river still flows past. Only the fortwalls are irretrievably gone.

Some say the Mariamman temple was built by a fallen woman of the Mary Magdalene type : but there was a sergeant Hoare in 1767 at Omalur Fort and the corruption of his name may be responsible for the confused story believed in and bewildering unto folk unhistoric, unlettered and unintellectual ! What will they not say, the fools ! They will cast doubt on Collector W. D. Davis' building and presenting the Kalyana Mantapam at the Siva Temple, the north-east mantapam at the Vishnu Temple, Salem, and his repairing the temple at Tiruchengode ! They will dispute, also the panthers' sweeping with their tails the precincts of the tomb of Shah-ha Mardan Ghazi at Sankari !

NAMAGIRI OF NAMAGIRIPET

The most conspicuous and outstanding feature of Namakal in the Salem District is the Rock-Fort. A bald rock wears a crown of battlements, even as Cæsar, Caius Julius, wore a wreath of laurels to hide the baldness of his head. So crowned, the rock is most impressive, and yet what gives it its sanctity, its importance is the group of shrines at its foot. On one side is the shrine of Sri Ranganatha accessible over a flight of steps and on the other are the shrines of Narasimha and Namagiri on ground level, with a collossal brick-work statue of Hanuman in front. According to a time-honoured Hindu practice, most of the Namakal boys are called Narasimha and most of the Namakal girls are called Namagiri.

My story is of one of the Namagiris of Namakal, who is said to have lent her name to the hamlet of Namagiripet. Plutarch records how a town was named after a horse, after the famous Bucephalus, Alexander's steed, and another after his favourite dog, Peritas, Plutarch's authority and so ours is Potamon of Lesbos.

Namagiri came of a house noted for its extensive charities, but falling on evil days, the members thereof scattered far and wide, and

Namagiri herself, unable to live amid surroundings full of painful associations, left for an open country with a few miserable huts, where amid the general obscurity, she hoped to live and die unknown.

The malarial region at the foot of the Kollis takes a frightful toll of human lives, and medical relief in those areas is the noblest and most essential form of social service. But in the far-off days of long ago of which I write, medical relief of the kind we now know of did not exist. Competing with the village barber who was the village surgeon and his wife who was the village mid-wife and maternity doctor, were quacks and sanyasis, who functioned as physicians, some relying on old-time specifics and empiric remedies, others on mere religious merit, on personal magnetism and psychic and other occult powers. Namagiri was one of those who, without any pretensions to scientific accomplishments, got pitch-forked into being and becoming doctors.

Namagiri was of the kindest disposition, with a look soft and tender and a word for every one, mild and courteous, so much so that her evident sympathy in many cases effected a cure. In other cases, a little care and caution in nursing, brought about a miraculous cure. An old woman tumbled into the village pond was

given first aid and restored to life. Colic pain was relieved by a plentiful administration of cold water with *thulsi* leaves *(Ocimum Sanctum)* and her reputation spread. Without intending it, she achieved a great reputation. Thousands flocked to Namagiripet, and settled down as in a sanatorium, until Kavandanpatti that was, became Namagiripet that we know of.

In very recent days at Salem, we know what a sensation was caused when a fraud of a sanyasi from Nambuthalai, in the Ramnad District, came over and dispensed holy water and all manner of men, including many that ought to know better, flocked to him for a remedy. We have heard how a lady took some magnetised water for curing a child suffering from *Infantine Paraplegia* or Little's Disease; how her husband expressed a doubt as to the efficacy of the water and the water forthwith turned into ink; how both the penitent and unhappy parents prostrated themselves before the sanyasi and took a fresh supply of the precious liquid; how before the regulation number of doses could be administered the sanyasi disappeared, leaving the parents disconsolate and the child without a remedy. Namagiri was no fraud. She lived on, growing in virtue in every sense of the expression and her reputation built up the Namagiripet that we see to-day.

How shall I describe Namagiri? How shall I communicate to you an adequate idea and make you realise something of the charm and fascination she exercised over all those who came within the circle of her influence? A domed head, religious and reverential, with a high forehead, marked by clear drawn parallel lines of thinking, very much like what you see in pictures of Lowell prefixed to his collected poems; then a long face with a long slender nose of domesticity, with lips ripe and ruddy such as Wilde spoke of, as being made for "the luring and the love of man." But oh! the best description won't bring anything to your mind, unless you have seen her or the like of her; therefore, instead of constructing a figure out of the details in an inventory, think of all the beautiful people you have seen, men, women, children, recall all the charms that have charmed you by way of lovely forehead, shapely nose, luscious lips, dimpled chin and cheeks, and all the loveliness that is Unique, you have before you the Namagiri of my story. She was not a dazzling beauty, but she charmed everyone with a sweetness that comes of comely features, a kindly disposition, a simple and sincere life.

Now Beauty provoketh a thief sooner than gold, and some people felt Namagiri's beauty rather provocative. Such was the feeling of

some hill-men of Korangunad on the Kollis. As they came week after week to the shandy at the foot of the hills, to sell guavas and other hill-fruits, or to pay their debts in paddy and the produce of their fields, they heard of and experienced the magical cures wrought by Namagiri, and resolved to carry her away to their own *nadu*. They gave her *makali* roots and prize-size oranges, and oftenest pomegranates of which she was desperately fond. They spoke of a great wild country where climbing a-top you could let your eye range over an infinite variety of scenes; over-fields of mustard, yellow with blossoms, bright as those on a printed page; over paddy-flats green and glorious; over plantain groves that looked dark and secretive ; over verdurous mountain-slopes radiant with water-falls, that stood straight like pillars of adamant, gleaming in the bright sunshine and soft moonlight ; over level ground cut up by cool runnels that carried limpid water, that rolled softly over slippery slopes and roared in little water-falls, but moved noiselessly under large drifts of fallen leaves ; over dense growths of calladium bearing flowers like Arum lilies. They spoke of cobra plants that bore coral berries in a blazing bunch ; of large sheets of water that nestled under the shade of jack and tamarind trees, reflecting the sky in their cool and clear depths ; of rose-bushes

and pomegranates that bore flower and fruit in plenty; and of everything the heart could desire, of the beauty and the bounty of Nature.

Namagiri listened with the fascination with which the Duchess in Browning listened to the Gipsy; and having heard of Arapaliswaran temple, famed in song for its sanctity and beauty of situation, agreed to be taken to that temple.

Manius Curius, who had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy and been carried thrice in triumph, rejected the gold of the Samnite Ambassadors, declaring that it was more honourable to conquer those who possessed the gold than to possess the gold itself. A similar thought possessed the Korangu *nadu* men, who not laying much claim to beauty themselves, thought it very good to possess one who possessed beauty. Under pretence of taking Namagiri to Arapaliswaran temple, they wanted to carry her off to their own *nadu*.

Meanwhile, Pattabiramiah of Namagiripet, grateful to Namagiri for relief from severe pain, such as Saint Tiru-navukarasu, one of the four great teachers of Saivaism, suffered from and sang about, and finally found relief for at Athigai Virattanam on the banks of the Gadila, made up his mind, like some other people in a similar situation, to offer marriage to his nurse-doctor. In every case of true love, the lover so

much under-estimates himself, that he believes himself unworthy of his beloved, unless he could break a lance in a tourney as in the old-days of chivalry, or do something extraordinary. Pattabiram was prepared to die for her, but there was no need, and indeed there was no opportunity for such sacrifice. He wanted to sell away all he had and lay the treasure at her feet along with his heart for her to tread on if she were so inclined; but soon a little reflection brought home to him the ridiculous nature of the proposal, and he feared how all the villagers will laugh at him and he would gain nothing by it and might in consequence fall low in the estimation of the lady herself. Thus between ecstasy of love and the steadying influence of a little reflection and commonsense, he halted and hesitated, but loving Namagiri quite desperately at a distance, found much business to transact in the street in which she lived; passed and re-passed her house-front many times over, particularly at evening time to catch a glimpse of her behind her lighted window, without himself being seen or suspected of seeing. He heard of Namagiri's going to the Kollis, and accompanied her without her knowledge and at such a respectful distance, that ere long he fairly lost his way. He saw everything double; looking at the twinkling stars

saw two *arudhras*. Presently a sudden and unexpected burst of rain swelled every mountain stream into a roaring torrent. Hours passed before the smaller runnels could become fordable, and days passed before one could safely set forth on his way again. In chagrin and in sheer despair, he rinsed his wet clothes and wept, and then got wet, with more rain, rinsed his clothes again and wept again. A patient and painstaking mathematician says he did so eight times, but of this we can't be sure, as the man was not with him and as it might possibly have been oftener.

Meanwhile, the Korangunad men, passing a tiger-trap and hearing the howl both of the tiger and of distant thunder, and like the Romans believing in the inauspicious character of such an omen as portending evil for their evil design, dropped the *Dholi* or chair in which they carried Namagiri and fled. The trap is a sort of a hollow cairn, with a narrow passage and enclosing a deep pit. The tiger is tempted into it by a bait in the shape of a lamb or a kid and then beaten with sticks, and killed. At such a spot Namagiri was dropped by the Korangunad men, who in this case were victims more of fear and superstition, than of the mischievous instinct characteristic of their *nadu*.

Fancy now, a soft and gentle lady, in the midst of a deep and dark forest, in rainy

weather with every leaf dripping with drops of biting cold water; her bearers and companions gone, herself alone in a strange and unknown spot in the vicinity of a howling tiger; with dank and decaying leaves emitting a rank and miasmic smell and stench; with noise of water everywhere and insects crawling uncomfortably up and down; not to talk of leeches that sucked blood! Och! The thing was not worth the trouble. Mountain life was savage and brutal, scarcely safe and certainly fraught with every peril and danger. The very *dholi* was filled with water, dripping from the umbrella and dripping at the head and foot and collecting in the centre, not a *dholi* but a bath-tub: and even that gone now. The men were brutes, but even brutish company was better than none. Solitude has its charms as a relief from society and not in and by itself. Certainly not at night in the depth of a dark forest at a time of rain and thunder!

Day dawned; the Korangunadu men were nowhere to be found, but with them all of Namagiri's miseries were also gone. The tiger when entering the trap had dislodged a stone which fell on it heavily and crushed its bones. The howl marked the last protest that life made against death, that the tiger made against "the deep damnation of his taking off."

Malayali coolies pass down every day to the plain, and some of them carried Namagiri to Arapaliswaran Temple after all.

The weather was remarkably fine: birds sang on every bough, and the mist rolling off revealed the glory of mountain and forest. Tall trees with tendrils twisted round the scarlet flowers blazing on them, stood up like pillars to the sky. The leaves rain-washed sparkled bright and beautiful with the pendulous pearls of rain-drops. The blossoms that opened at early dawn sent forth a sweet aroma, which was bracing and refreshing to inhale.

And the way to Arapaliswaran Kovil went undulating over hill and dale across little channels fringed with ferns and skirted by tall and stately trees. At each turn of the road, new prospects, new scenes of beauty broke upon the view and the occasional appearance of human dwellings was most re-assuring. A broad river wound its way between two hillocks and the oranges that hung plentifully on the branches were of a bright colour that gave variety to the scene. So too the plantains. Where human habitations were not, wild flowers, violet and crimson and blue, lent beauty to the landscape. The water in the wells was milky. In some places there were holes fresh dug over-night by bears digging in the soil for ants. The claws were clearly at work also

at jack fruits and the possibility of meeting a bear was exciting. Without any accident of the kind the party reached Arapaliswaran Kovil.

On a mild elevation skirted round and washed by the purifying waters of a torrent that leaps down in cataract after cataract to the plains scooping its way down the hill-sides, on a grassy lawn that marks the arch and bend of a horse-shoe, over-looking a deep valley that reaches out into the neighbouring district of Trichinopoly, rises in solitary splendour the ancient shrine of Arapaliswaran. A solitary cocoanut tree is a conspicuous land-mark from the Chulavandi side. On such a height, as on a height intellectual, one takes a broad view, takes vast stretches of landscape at one glance. From here, one beholds the sun rise up and bathe the world in light. The air blows fresh and free. The tidal waves of that ocean of air "into our inmost being flow and lift us unawares out of all meaner cares." That is why temples are located on beauty-spots and that too is what makes for sanctity. An atmosphere of holiness invests such spots and raising man above mere mundane considerations, links him with whatever is stately and sublime, with whatever is superb and supreme.

And what a pleasure to lave your feet in the cool mountain stream, watch the shoals of

black-backed fish rise and flow towards you for offerings of food! How they roll over each other, splash the water with their tails and keep up a pretty commotion until all the rice is eaten up and there is nothing left to fight for. Oh! such sights are an adequate compensation for any troubles endured, any difficulties undergone.

Pattabiraman's sufferings also ceased with dawn. He was taken to a Malayali hut and fed on whatever the poor owner thereof could provide. But he was impatient to be gone, and indignantly demanded of every one he met, including stone images of village deities, the whereabouts of Namagiri. When he could not get an answer, he rudely assaulted the Gods, and the Malayalis taking him to be daft, left him alone to his own devices, by which cause and circumstance, he never reached Arapaliswaran temple at all. Lady Dorothy Neville tells us of her father's temper, and gives us an instance of the inconvenience it caused him. She tells us how he stormed at coachmen violently, so much so that once on the Continent a frightened coachman took his horses away, leaving his lordship the luxury of storming at vacancy in the depths of a wood on a dark night. A similar fate befell Pattabiraman, and he went down the steep Pulianchoali road into the Trichinopoly District, more indignant than Arnold's Tyrian Trader at

sight of the Grecian Coaster. He grew red in the face and hoarse in the throat and developed a sort of apoplexy from which he was finally recovered by a Unani doctor who gave him the "Fat of the Rocks," the dew gathered from a hillside and kept as per advice of ancient writers, in an ass's hoof because of its exceeding piercing cold. Plutarch in his life of Alexander speaks of this distillation of the rocks, as a deadly poison and attributes the death of Alexander to the administration thereof. But it is a well-known specific in Unani therapeutics; a Hakim gave it the other day to Ahmed, Ahmed Hussain, and Rahamatullah, all of whom became in consequence fat as elephants, fierce as lions, and fruitful as the vine.

Namagiri, quite oblivious of what befell Pattabiraman, stayed on the Kollis admiring the scenery and practising austerities. The tiger was stripped of its coat and claws and teeth. It is said that the sight of the tiger-skin it was that suggested to Namagiri the idea of starting off on a new career, that of an ascetic. She changed her name and garb, assumed the yellow robe and called herself Yogananda and thus unsexed herself also. As further confirming herself in the course she had adopted she took a vow of silence for a year. How silence adds to sanctity may not be clear, but any kind of discipline is bound

to result in an access of strength to the will and thereby make easy the conquest of one's lower self.

Months later, after many wanderings, Pattabiraman went to the Kollis, to the temple of Arapaliswaran, but failed to recognise in the silent sanyasi his lost Love. Time had cooled the ardour of his passion, or perhaps his sufferings strengthened his will and sharpened his common-sense. He used to say indeed that Namagiri could be found out by her inordinate love of pomegranates and by the two dazzling nose-screws that she had a feminine failing for. You may look out for any man with the holes on the sides of the nose if you like and tempt him with pomegranates particularly if he be good-looking, but it will be a futile, if not a foolish task, certainly not worth your while, as all this took place long, long ago. Even Pattabiraman gave up the quest, content to lament in Wordsworthian verse,

She lived unknown and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be,
But she is in her grave and Oh
The difference to me!

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